THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Vol. 10 Autumn · 1941 No. 4

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In the Workshop

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Editorial

If those who were more directly responsible for the beginning of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR had been endowed with more than usual foresight and had had premonition of the hazards of magazine publication during the past ten years, it is a question whether they would have had the courage to undertake the venture. That the magazine has come through its first decade with such success and such enthusiasm on the part of its readers is certainly a tribute to the soundness of the conception and the reality of the need. If there was a need for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR in the early thirties, it would seem that the need is even more insistent today in the early forties, when the world has more than its usual share of false prophets, quack economists and reckless maligners of the past.

At the beginning, then, of a new decade it is the concern of those who are interested in the welfare of THE SCHOLAR and of all that it represents to inquire how its cause can best be served. In a word, how can we make a better AMERICAN SCHOLAR, one that will go farther and farther into the country and attract to its already respectable number many other readers of similar tastes and aspirations?

The most effective way is to set down certain statements which have directed the course of this magazine and which, with varying interpretations, will continue to direct its course. No editor or editorial adviser is ever completely satisfied with the results of his efforts, but it gives him some satisfaction to know that those whom he seeks to please will credit him with normal human intelligence and a hope that experience will help him to do better.

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The American Scholar

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR should be open to the expression of all honest and sincere convictions when such expression is of general and not limited interest. This puts a load on the editor but it cannot be evaded. So long as the magazine can hold its columns to this standard, so long will it be read and have a worthwhile influence.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR should not be a place for dire prophecy, for unsound political or economic theories, or for mere rabble-rousing to stir up fear and unrest—and here the task imposed upon the editor seems a big one.

THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR should respect the interests of men and women who wish to make their own lives more interesting and more vital. It should not be primarily for the specialist or research worker but its pages should be receptive to the results of their work.

This is an American magazine. Its ideal should be that of which the American is proud. Especially should its columns be open to those who seek to interpret this country, to define its way of life, to describe its alluring variety of character and region.

It is the hope that in its pages the English language may be used not only with its "purity undefiled" but equally with a recognition of its marvelous quality of adaptation to new times, new ideas, new things.

Can we conceive a higher purpose for our magazine or express it in more moving words than those of Emerson in the address which gave this magazine its name, in which he stressed the dignity of true scholarship as well as the duties of the far-visioned scholar to his less gifted fellow men?

> He is to find consolation in exercising the highest function of human nature. He is one who raises himself from private considerations and breathes and lives on public and illustrious thoughts. He is the world's eye. He is the world's heart. He is to resist the vulgar prosperity that retrogrades ever to barbarism, by preserving and communicating heroic sentiments, noble biographies, melodious verse, and the conclusions of history.

WILL D. HOWE

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America's Comic Demigods

RICHARD M. DORSON

FROM a nation lean in folk annals and too short-lived to boast an heroic age there has suddenly sprung a knavish breed of blustering superheroes. Survey the American callings and the chances are you will find in each the same titanic character—whether hunter, trapper, flatboatman, cowboy, sailor, lumberjack, farmer, oil driller, iron puddler, wheat thresher or hobo. This native portrait, at once buffoon and strong hero, braggart and superman, joker and work giant, stands as America's unique contribution to the world's store of folklore. It is a strange snub by American literary scholars that they have been inclined to read in the comic demigod only an overblown juvenile fable.

In the last 20 years there has been gathered into print from all corners of the nation a swashbuckling pantheon of these comic demigods. Texas vaunts a twin pair of cowboy Samsons in Pecos Bill, who rode a mountain lion, used a rattlesnake for a quirt, drank gallons of boiling coffee at a gulp and wiped his mouth on a handful of cactus; and in Strap Buckner, the man with a genius for knocking people down, who knocked down every man in the state and then took on the Devil himself. When the Fiend in ungentlemanly fashion swelled to enormous size he caught his tail in a cloud; the too chivalrous Strap waited for him to extricate himself, and was last seen borne limply into the sky on a gray nag bestrode by Satan. In neighboring Oklahoma a remarkable oil driller, Kemp Morgan, complete oil gang all in one, located oil with his sensitive nose and started every oil well in operation today in the Southwest. Nebraska, land of prairies and dust storms and immigrant farmers, exalts two muscled giants, Febold Feboldson and Antoine Barada. Febold, first white settler west of the Mississippi, did

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his best to make Nebraska a fit state to live in by twisting incoming tornadoes into knots and chasing them over the state line, but the job was too much even for a superman and he finally gave up and moved to California. Antoine was reputedly the strongest man who ever ranged the shores of Missouri, and a mighty jumper; one day he entered a jumping contest where the mark stood at 10¾ feet, and jumped so far it took him a day to walk back. Among the lumber raftsmen of the Wisconsin River, before the coming of the railroads, legendary tales centered about Whiskey Jack, over seven feet tall and a Samson in strength; something of a joker as well as a fighter and drinker, Jack once hit a river town powerfully thirsty but short on cash, and set all his boys up to drinks by trading the same bundle of lath over and over again for whiskey slings. (Davy Crockett had done the same trick on the earlier Kentucky frontier with a coonskin; today in the Ozarks the immortal Davy still lives and the mountaineers tell of his deadly grin and wicked rifle, and how once he hung his powder horn on one corner of the moon, mistaking it for a big yaller stob in a cedar tree.) Lumberjack tales in West Virginia celebrate Tony Beaver of Eel River, eight feet tall, who smoked a pipe so large the hill folk thought the mountains had caught fire, and who drank liquor so powerful one swallow would make a bear turn inside out—or a rabbit spit in a bulldog's eye.

Along the eastern seaboard counterparts of the frontier strong men crow as lustily. From York State come two whopper-mouthed woodsmen, famed among upstate farmers and lumberjacks for tall deeds and taller talk. John Cicero Caesar Augustus Darling boasted of boiling seven gallons of maple syrup out of his beard after he shaved it off; one misty morning he shingled his barn in a fog so thick he laid shingles on it forty feet above the roof. Bill Greenfield counters with the winter so cold that words froze and failed to thaw out till the following Fourth of July; and the shot he fired from a crooked shotgun that chased a deer three times around a mountain before catching up with it. Moving seawards, Bowleg Bill the Seagoing

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Cowboy heaves into view off Cape Cod, eight feet four inches without his long-heeled boots. When shanghaied aboard a Cape Cod whaler, far away from his Wyoming range, Bill was amazed to find himself on unfamiliar pastures; "Durn'd," he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes, "if I hain't flooded the range in my sleep!" On a strange element Bill disports himself in the customary eye-opening fashion, riding herd on a two-ton tuna, lassoing a mermaid, and upending hogsheads of old Jamaica with the sea serpent. The legitimate king of Yankee sailors, however, is Alfred Bulltop Stormalong (whose initials stand for Able-Bodied Seaman). Old Stormie stood four fathoms tall in his bare feet and could tie an octopus in knots with his bare hands; he sailed a ship so large that the crew were mounted on horses, and the masts hinged to let the moon pass by. Dents in the Atlantic coastline are simply marks where the "Albatross" turned around in shallow water; once she plunged straight through the isthmus and left the Panama Canal. Thirty-four men were needed to turn the wheel, though Old Stormie could do it by himself.

In newer incarnations the strong hero reflects the changed setting of an urban, industrial society, but yields no whit of prowess to his backwoods kinsmen. Among the Pittsburgh iron puddlers he appears as Joe Magerac (Polish for jackass), a man of steel, over seven feet tall with a back as big as a door. Joe was so strong he could twist an 850-pound dolly bar into a figure eight; he made over 2000 tons of steel in one day. With his own hands he tossed ore and scrap into the furnace, stirred the molten steel, and sat in the door of the furnace till the flames came up round his chin. He would drive rivets with his fist, and squeeze hot steel until it spurted through his fingers into long steel rails, four from each hand. Once he was walking on a railroad track when a train came along and whistled for him to get off. But Joe said to himself, "I made these rails, and I made that engine too"; and he just reached out and pushed that engine back until he crossed the tracks. Steel workers say that if a man works a long time in the mills and treats

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his buddies right he will some time see Joe sitting in the furnace, and that if he speaks to him Joe will say "Hello."

Glory of the Bowery bums, Big Mose Humphreys was twelve feet tall, had feet like East River barges, wore a red fireman's helmet as big as a tent. His strength was that of ten men; where other Bowery Boys went into battle carrying brickbats, he attacked the Plug Uglies and the Dead Rabbits with an uprooted lamppost and a butcher's cleaver. He could hold a horsecar in the palm of his hand, drink a drayload of beer at one sitting, and swim the Hudson in two strokes. But if he wanted to go from Manhattan to Jersey he just jumped. When his girl turned him down Mose went to the South Seas, married an island princess, and never again was seen in the Bowery. But even now, when an old bum picks up a cigar butt, he says "Big Mose must of dropped it." Mose smoked such fine cigars that millionaires used to pop into the gutter to pick up his butts.

Other even more shadowy figures can be dimly glimpsed in the same towering outlines. Pullman porters revere Daddy Joe, who was so tall he could stand in the car aisle and let down an upper with each hand; when he was in a hurry he made down both uppers and lowers simultaneously; in crises of flood and Indian attack Daddy Joe saved his passengers from watery graves and short haircuts by prompt heroic action. Superman of the Southern chain gangs is Daddy Mention, who could escape from any chain gang in the world; he simply whirled his chains with such velocity that he took off like an airplane. Dakota wheat-threshers tell how Big Frank could outthresh any six men that ever lived—to his own undoing, for soon there wasn't enough business in the Dakotas to support him. Big Frank consoled himself nights when he slept in the granaries by sucking the stalks dry of juice; his sad end came the night he slept in a bin stored—the crop had been so poor—with cactus stalks and locoweed.

The query naturally arises, after even so swift a glance at this roistering crew, whether here does not exist a race of legendary giant-men comparable to the gods and heroes of older

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mythologies. Are the fragments of rumor, hearsay and tradition that have been preserved the mere vestiges of extensive oral myth-cycles, spread and rehearsed and embellished and magnified by the rude poetic lips of American pioneers and toilers? Do these mock-heroic colossi, stretching skywards on waves of expansive fictions yet rooted deeply and solidly in American soil, hint of an obscured pantheon that needs but the Homeric touch of folk-poet or chronicler to secure its rightful claim as a rough-hewn American Olympus? An answer in part to such speculative fancies can best be suggested when we examine the career of the one strong hero to receive national recognition: all the lesser demigods rest under the shadow of the archetypal figure of Paul Bunyan.

The growth of the Paul Bunyan legend may be traced through four progressive stages. Initially tales are supposed to have circulated orally in the latter half of the last century wherever the lumbering industry flourished. Unfailingly each new Bunyan author professes to have heard the stories actually told in lumber camps of the early 1900's. It seems clear however that nothing like the present literary tale was ever heard in the bunk shanties. Oral circulation was limited to the culture group, references to Old Paul were delivered more as casual incidents than connected yarns or tales, situations and language were drawn from the white pine logging culture of the lumber camps and hence technical and unintelligible to the layman. Within the code that prescribed manner, form and occasion, a Bunyan bard improvised incidents with characteristic tags or kinks. For example: when the crew strikes a big blob of iron, the narrator motions them back, gets down in the sand, puts his ear to it, starts back to his pail saying nothing. "Hey Cap, what is it?" "Aw she's a ha'rsping, but whether it's off Paul Bunyan's mattress or not I don't know."

No hint of legend seems to have reached print until 1914, when a full-page poem in a lumber trade journal and a lumber company's advertising pamphlet introduced the now classic

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tales. In ever widening circles of publication the legend was recast and retold in booklets, leaflets, chapbooks, magazine articles, poems, serial newspaper columns supplied by avid fans, until a decade later the cycle had expanded to book length. With the publication in 1924 and 1925 of the first books, by Esther Shephard and James Stevens, the hero attained national stature and other books multiplied in course, varied and diffuse as the legend itself. On the growing shelf of Bunyan literature a ten-cent Woolworth item jostles a ten-dollar Derrydale imprint; a slight *Paul Bunyan Natural History* leaflet describes the fauna of Bunyanland, and an elaborate privately printed *Paul Bunyan Geography*, boxed and bound in a lumber grain motif, traces Paul's impact on the face of America. In prose, verse, drama, in forms as extreme as doctors' theses and advertising brochures, the tales have propagated. But in the end it is the juveniles that predominate, either in full-length chronicles devoted exclusively to the forest giant, or in folk-books that range him with his fellow-demigods; and had the story ended with the books the last word would be that it had fallen to the children.

The most dramatic aspect of the legend's course was to come not through but outside the printed page. In its third phase it bursts all literary bonds and finds expression in pageantry and a variety of art media: sculpture, ballet, musical suite, lyric opera, folk drama, radio play, painting, lithographing, wood carving, and even a glass mosaic mural. A practice of holding a "Paul Bunyan's Day," a gala community festival or carnival in honor of the timber god, originated in Brainerd and Bemidji, Minnesota, but spread to Concord, New Hampshire and Tacoma, Washington. At these ceremonies the carved dummy of a majestic Paul, perhaps with his faithful companion Babe the Blue Ox (customarily described as measuring 42 axe handles and a plug of tobacco between the horns), would preside over an active scene of logging contests and woodsmen sports, birling, canoe-tilting, log-bucking, logrolling, log-chopping. Images of Paul have on lesser occasions been fashioned from

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substances various as snow and aluminum, or men of heroic proportions may play Bunyan for a day. So fast and far had the "myth" spiraled upwards into the popular imagination that figures of Old Paul adorned both the New York and the California World's Fairs of 1939.

Illustrative of this new artistic acceptance is a recent ludicrous episode in the Bunyan story, the reading in it of universal implications and eternal human types by a resident English poet. W. H. Auden describes Old Paul as a naive, swaggering, optimistic 19th century Victorian, "a projection of the collective state of mind of a people whose tasks were primarily the physical mastery of nature"; sees in Johnny Inkslinger "the speculative and critical intelligence" that despises the manual labor which makes possible the life of thought; interprets Hels Helson (a character invented by James Stevens) as the man of brawn without brains who is dangerous when his consciousness of lacking intelligence turns into suspicion and hatred of those who possess it; and is puzzled by Paul's consort Babe but conceives of her "quite arbitrarily, as a symbol of his anima." Not surprisingly Auden's choral operetta, *Paul Bunyan*, puzzled the critics. Still it must be accounted a characteristic inflation of the original bubble of legend.

In his fourth and final incarnation the mock divinity breaks loose from artistic as well as literary devotion and passes into the popular speech as a symbolic figure of allusion, to point a large comical happening, commend a superior physical achievement, or punctuate an exaggerated effect of almost any sort. Hundreds of these allusions occur annually in the nation's newspapers: Paul Bunyan is associated with a "toothpick" sixty feet long, the yearly American soft drink thirst of 13 billion bottles, the appetite of a thief who steals 1800 pounds of sugar, a sigh after a car overturns without upsetting 200 pounds of dynamite, a highball resulting from dumping 25,000 gallons of whiskey in Chesapeake Bay, an egg measuring nine and one-eighth by three and one-half inches, a shave with an axe. Remarkable persons are described as Paul Bunyanesque: John

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Montague the fabulous golfer; a 13-year-old boy who can lift a hundred-pound weight over his head with one hand; a college basketball star; a New Jersey detective of local reputation. Or great tasks are described as worthy of Old Paul: clearing a log jam in Nevada; moving Akron, Ohio, to Minnesota; making a sounding with a dead eighty-ton whale; reforesting Wisconsin.

This final phase in a way harks back to the first, in the allusive use of the logging giant as a figure of casual and cryptic reference, though the limited culture group usage has been transformed into an extensive popular currency. The crucial stage in the process—what might be called the legend's crucible—is that of the literary exfoliations and proliferations from which emerges a standard juvenile comic demigod. In the expanding body of literary legend tenacious key tales have shared the content with such accretions as eccentric supporting characters, giantesque labors that account for the nation's geographical landmarks, and a weird zoology that had previously existed independent of Bunyanland. From the very first printed accounts certain central details—Pea-Soup Lake, the giant griddle greased by cookboys skating over it with hams strapped to their feet, the Round River Drive, the Winter of the Blue Snow, the marvelous cookhouse, the stretching buckskin harness—have persisted and descended almost inviolate (save that the cookees may become Negro boys or Chinese flunkeys or Paul's daughters, and the ham may turn into pork or bacon rind). A narration of the legends that authentically maintains the flavor of frontier storytelling, such as Esther Shephard's, has many more of these germinal stories than the stylized and dressy rendering of James Stevens.

On the other hand, literary growth is seen in the introduction of a shadowy cortege; in the completed tableau Paul is flanked by such assisting figures as Babe the Big Blue Ox (supposedly so named by the author of the first booklet), Benny the Little Blue Ox, Elmer the Reversible Dog, Johnny Inkslinger the super-secretary, Sourdough Sam the cook, Brimstone Bill

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the Bull Whacker, Big Ole the blacksmith, Shot Gundesson the Bull of the Woods, the Seven Axemen, and various other camp beasts and followers. A second accretion is seen in the absorption into the cycle of such strange and grotesque beasts as the hodag, the dismal sauger, the whimpering whinding, the gumberoo, the tote-road shagamaw. A further narrative development comes in the large-scale feats and mishaps by which Paul forms the Mississippi River, the Thousand Islands, the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Rockies, and similar distinguishing features of the American landscape; the North Dakota prairie is a result of Paul's logging operations, the Grand Canyon was caused by Paul's dragging his peavy-hook behind him, and the Florida peninsula is merely one of Paul's stray mittens that filled with sand.

In its expansion the legend has spread across the entire tier of northern states, and been most eagerly claimed by Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, Washington, Oregon, among a dozen contenders. Yet as he stands Paul Bunyan is the special property of no local cult or club, of no one state, nor even of the whole northern lumbering region; he may spud in Texas oil fields or clear forests in Georgia. How far indeed the legend has traveled beyond even national bounds no one can say, for there are reports of locally-colored tales in the West Indies, in the copper mines of Peru, in Alaska. Circulation, diffusion and popularization, in their mysterious ways, have established Paul as a cherished folk hero independent of the fixed body of literary legend that bred him. When in the spring of 1940 a learned journal published an article, "Paul Bunyan, Myth or Hoax?" that pointed to obvious inconsistencies in the literature and threw doubts on its folk basis, a rash of newspaper editorials rushed to the defense of the stricken giant. Can you impugn the existence of a hero whose greatness is attested by books and statues? they asked. Does Santa Claus need proof? It is clear that cavils and sneers of the impious can not disturb the secure if seemingly manufactured place of Paul Bunyan in American tradition.

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Into this progression from slightly known occupational or group hero to national folk figure, can be placed all the native strong heroes that have so far come to light. Each reaches print from a supposed oral currency in the earthy humor of an elemental group; however slender the actual folk basis, the fiction of folklore is always elaborately maintained, and even exaggerated, in the literary second state. When once the comic demigod was brazenly set forth as an undisguised literary creation, Caleb Catlum of Catlumville dismally failed to take. No matter how diverse the origins of the strong heroes—and Big Mose is descendant of an urban fireman of mid-19th century plays, Strap Buckner first appears in the florid report of a Western traveller in the 1870's, John Henry is properly a tragic character of Negro ballads, while imported, Irish, Portuguese, Swedish and Polish talk has been pilfered for Finn MacCool, Bowleg Bill, Febold Feboldson and Joe Magerac—they all emerge from the standardizing literary mill as identical native comic demigods, cutting the same large capers, accredited with similar folk origins. Probably in the oral period not the group but individuals with a storytelling flair—described by the folklorists as "active tradition carriers"—fanned the legend flame.

It is possible to observe the lesser heroes at every point in the process of literary growth, from the first creeping into print in stray and incidental notices, or even before in some collector's slight manuscript-recording of half a dozen tales, to the final achievement of several individual volumes and the emergence from purely literary to artistic and popular recognition. Farthest advanced in the literary course, John Henry and Pecos Bill are already beginning to penetrate into the art media; barely over the borderline from oral fantasy into the visible world of print is Ossawald Crumb of Ludington, Michigan, tersely introduced by a local hotel booklet as a "sort of Paul Bunyan person." How many occupational supermen or fabulous village personalities have flourished or still thrive in the initial stage of purely oral gossip, report, yarnings and clustering local tales, is of course beyond determination.

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In between these two extremes lie the rest of the known strong heroes, gathering prestige and a following through featured anecdotes in magazine articles, books of regional interest and juvenile folk books; not until well on in his literary career does the clownish giant legitimately acquire his own volume of recorded adventures. When he prematurely begins it with one, as do Tony Beaver and Bowleg Bill, the obvious strain on the sandy folk-foundation is not tempered and made credible by previous familiarity with the hero, and he must redescend to the treadmill of humble literary circulation before he can gradually win through to popular acceptance. Paul Bunyans do not spring full-statured into the public ken, but grow slowly and by devious means.

Does, then, the American claim to a colorful body of native folk tradition turn out to rest on a synthetic and spurious product of largely literary manufacture? By no means; the great popular strong heroes of the world have come into enduring fame by a distinctly analogous process. Folklorists are agreed that neither the purely literary and invented hero-figure, or the champion known only to the folk, ever secures general recognition; apparently both must burst the confining bonds of merely oral or merely literary circulation, either by breaking down the splendid literary epic into rude folk stories, or by building up scattered ballads into a single epic narrative, so that the tales pass from oral tradition to printed legend and back again in a continuous cross-fertilizing cycle.

On every level of literature, from Beowulf in stately Anglo-Saxon epic to Superman and his myriad emulators in the newsstand comic books, the strong hero has exercised a universal human appeal that is often related to active folk tradition. Such famous mighty men as Samson and Heracles are suspected of having been clownish champions in oral tradition prior to their transcription into serious literature. The Finns' Kullervo, the Celts' Cúchulain, the Serbs' Prince Marko, are representative of the semi-popular hero whose extravagant feats and scrapes were celebrated in folk tales and ballads that constituted

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epics in the making. (Kullervo in the Kalevala—and his imitation, Longfellow's Kwasind—is a buffoon and strong man in one.) In English humorous chapbooks comparable to the Crockett almanacs appears a popular strong hero, Tom Hickathrift, whose anecdotal deeds of prowess in conquering robbers, ruffians and even whole armies likewise recall Davy. A large rock in East Anglia is known as Hickathrift's washbasin—just as a steel cable at a Paul Bunyan carnival is pointed out as Paul's watch chain. One distinguishing feature of heroic legend is the strong hero's precocious strength: Heracles strangled snakes in his cradle, Kullervo tore his swaddling clothes to pieces and smashed his limewood cradle, Gargantua (an example of a literary comic strong hero becoming folk property) performed prodigious infantile antics, matched by his son Pantagruel who snapped his swaddling bands to swallow half a cow and a whole bear and had to be tied in his cradle with iron chains. So, in the two fullest American cycles, Davy Crockett and Paul Bunyan spring from extraordinary cradles to commit incredible deeds. The boastful and the giantesque aspects of the comic demigod call to mind the similar inventive brags of the Baron Münchausen, some of which appear transplanted in American soil, and the legendary labors of Teutonic giants which explain existing mountains, islands and other natural landmarks.

Both in process of growth and in pattern of story the American strong hero shares characteristics common to the international type. In their travels through oral, literary and even artistic spheres, and in their picaresque exaggerative plots, the legendary fictions of the comic demigod possess the two essential folk-tale requirements, popular diffusion and definite folk motifs. If America's demigods are not comparable to the deities of mythology, they are analogous to the strong heroes of Old World popular tales who represent a lower level—either uncrystallized or degenerate—of heroic legend. On the one hand it is erroneous to read mistaken values into them, since they have not crystallized into literary heroes of epic dignity, and they have not survived as genuine heroes of the folk; on the

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other it is equally erroneous to disregard them as lacking in traditional elements or devoid of folkloristic significance. Their uniqueness lies in the distinctively American humor and local color that clothe a type universal in traditional narrative.

Some will regret that our folk hero came late to life when radio and jazz and syndicated newspapers had poisoned the ancient channels of legend and folk story, and lessened his chance for sedate epic glory. For the celebration of American myth is strictly a 20th-century phenomenon; mark how the legends of the old frontier's two most glorious ring-tailed roarers, Mike Fink and Davy Crockett, have only in the last decade been gathered and spread abroad. Still, if 20th-century conditions offer few parallels to the Heroic Age, precedent affirms at least the possibility that the hero-clown of popular story and song may, like Samson and Heracles and Kullervo, acquire dignity in serious literature. For the present at any rate the Bunyans and Finks and John Henrys occupy a burlesque level, if an unerasable place, in American tradition—perhaps doomed for further indignities in the folklore of the comic strips, perhaps destined for immortality in the unwritten American epic.

Note: For sidelights on the history of Paul Bunyan legend I am indebted to personal interviews with its three leading authorities: Parish S. Lovejoy of Ann Arbor, Michigan, retired professor of forestry who remembers, and critically interprets, stories he heard as a woods boss in the height of the lumber industry; Charles E. Brown of Madison, Wisconsin, curator of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, who has been issuing booklets about Paul since 1922; and W. B. Laughead of Westwood, California, advertising manager of the Red River Lumber Company, whose advertising pamphlets continuously in print since 1914 first introduced Paul as an American culture hero. Publicists of the lesser heroes from whom I have drawn follow: Herbert Asbury (Big Mose), Florence E. Barns (Strap Buckner), Paul R. Beath (Febold Feboldson), B. A. Botkin (Big Frank, Daddy Mention), Charles E. Brown (Whiskey Jack, Old Stormalong), Jeremiah Digges (Bowleg Bill), J. Harris Gable (Antoine Barada), Stewart Holbrook (Daddy Joe), Louis C. Jones (Bill Greenfield), Margaret P. Montague (Tony Beaver), Edward O'Reilly (Pecos Bill), Harold W. Thompson (John Darling), J. Ernest Wright (Joe Magerac).

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World Government Today and Tomorrow

AMOS J. PEASLEE

DOES the "society of nations" exist as a political entity? Have we already, in a sense, a "super-sovereignty" —a system of world government superior to the will of any single nation? Is there such a thing as an international constitution? If so, what sort of an instrument is it? What does it provide? What does it lack?

It is fruitless to embark on these speculations without considering at the outset the gravity of the present challenge to world government and to international law. Germany's war aims go far beyond the destruction of the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. They are directed at the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which gave birth to the modern concept of a society of free nations.

Germany's war is a revolution—a civil war—against world government as we know it. Far from proving that such government does not exist, however, the existing international situation proves precisely the opposite. The hue and cry is rising today, just as it did in the three years following August 1914. Sooner or later—whether it requires three years or thirty—it will swing the predominant will and might of the civilized nations of the world to enforce the cardinal concept that there is a *right* to live at peace with, and to be free from brutal attacks by, other nations. That passion to live and let live and to be free is as prevalent among our South and Central American neighbors as it is among our English-speaking cousins. It is to be found, with a few unfortunate exceptions, in every corner of the globe.

If "democracy" were confined—as some of our present-day philosophers tell us—to only about 15 of the 64 (more or less) nations of the world, or to six nations, or to our own nation

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alone, we should view with great alarm the possible outcome of this challenge. But there is no justification for so limited a definition of the "democracies," either in the constitutions of the nations or in their governmental operations. About 95% of the 64 nations possessed in 1939 written constitutions providing for a form of government very similar to our own. Over half of those constitutions had been adopted since 1920 and about a quarter since 1930. With rare exceptions each contained a "Bill of Rights" guaranteeing liberty and equality of the individual, freedom of speech, the press, thought and conscience, and safeguards against arbitrary powers of the State.

If democratic institutions and free thought and free speech have proved anything within the span of a single generation, they have demonstrated that there are underlying conceptions which are common to the minds of most men—that friendliness and neighborliness and justice are predominant instincts among 90% of the people of the world.

The American Institute of International Law at its first session in 1916 adopted what is described as a "Declaration of the Rights and Duties of the Nations." That declaration enumerated five fundamental national rights:

(1) The "right to exist and to protect and to conserve its existence," but not "by the commission of unlawful acts against innocent and unoffending states."

(2) The right of "independence" and the "pursuit of happiness" and the right "to develop itself" with due regard to the rights of other states.

(3) The right to equality before the law and before other nations.

(4) The right to exercise "exclusive jurisdiction over its territory and all persons, whether native or foreign, found therein."

(5) The right to have its rights "respected and protected by all other nations"; for, said the Institute, "right and duty are correlative and the right of one is the duty of all to observe."

World government is not synonymous with universal peace.

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Man has outlawed crime in municipal law but he has not abolished it. Better world government will not soon, if ever, mean a state of perfect peace, but it will mean the discarding from the law of nations many concepts of unrestricted national rights held a generation ago. The vigor of the fiction that neutrality and isolation are possibilities when international crime develops on a wholesale scale, are evidence of the indignant demand of each nation that it has the right to be let alone.

Elihu Root in his presidential address to the American Society of International Law at its second annual meeting in 1908 called attention to the fact that the first public national act in the new world of the Western Hemisphere, as found in our Declaration of Independence, was an appeal to the "decent respect for the opinions of mankind."

One of our human peculiarities is that we seem to require a common antagonist in order to combine effectively for a common purpose. Perhaps the assaults against free nations which were launched in 1914, and again with intensified fury in 1939, have had at least one use. They have given the society of nations a *raison d'être* more persuasive than generations of argument. They have proved that without effective world government no individual nation can be assured of the enjoyment of its basic rights, or even of its independent existence.

In the field of international legislation up to the present time law-making processes have differed basically from those of national governments. There is not and never has been a congress or parliament of the nations, or of any considerable number of them, to which the nations have delegated legislative power. The phenomenon of international relations which most closely resembles a national legislature is the international conference. Some conferences have been occasional, such as the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, the London Naval Conference of 1908-09, the Versailles Conference of 1918-19, the Washington Disarmament Conference of 1921-22, the Conference for the Progressive Codification of International Law held at The Hague in 1930, the Inter-American Conference for the Main-

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tenance of Peace held at Buenos Aires in 1936, and—in earlier times—the Congress of Vienna of 1815 and the European Congress of Catholic and Protestant States of 1644-48. Other international conferences have been periodic or more or less permanent in their character, such as the sessions of the Assembly and Council of the League of Nations and the eight international conferences of the American States from 1887 to 1938.

But whether periodic or permanent, international conferences have never assumed to exercise the final sovereign powers of a legislature. They merely draft and propose measures. The measures become effective when, and only to the extent that, they are ratified by the nations represented at the conferences.

International legislation is, of course, not limited to the products of these meetings. Many multipartite treaties partaking of the nature of legislation have been negotiated entirely through diplomatic channels. Some conventions such as the one providing for the creation of the Permanent Court of International Justice are described within their own terms as "statutes." Judge Manley O. Hudson, now a member of the Permanent Court of International Justice, places in the category of international legislation some 257 conventions, treaties, protocols, declarations, acts or agreements signed during the 50 years preceding 1914, and not less than 400 which were signed during the 20 subsequent years. Some conception of the rate at which international legislation is now being ground out is to be gathered by recalling that at the single Seventh International Conference of American States held at Montevideo in 1935, 95 resolutions, 6 conventions and 1 protocol were adopted; and at the Special Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace at Buenos Aires in 1936, 11 treaties and conventions were signed, all in the nature of legislative acts. Criss-crossing among the nations there is a vast network of legislative documents which are becoming ever more important in international relations and somewhat appalling in increasing complexity.

Finally, in contemplating the field of international legislation we should recall the progress which has been made toward

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codification of international law. The work in the Western Hemisphere which began by the appointment of the Commission of Jurists at the Rio Conference of the American States in 1906 has finally ripened into the creation of the Committee of Experts which held its first meeting at the Pan American Union in April 1937. The League of Nations Assembly and Council provided in 1924 for the creation of a Committee for the Progressive Codification of International Law. At the first International Conference which met at The Hague in March and April 1930 under its inspiration, 48 nations were represented. The draft conventions prepared by the Harvard research experts trace their roots to that Committee and that Conference.

The most serious handicap which confronts any effort to codify or improve international law is the cumbersome existing machinery for accomplishing international legislation. We know the difficulties experienced by the Assembly of the League of Nations under the principle of unanimous consent, and of its efforts to avoid or circumvent that principle in procedural measures. International legislation will continue to be lacking in simplicity of enactment, and will always be of scattered geographical application unless and until the nations are willing to delegate to permanent representatives actual legislative powers.

The judicial department of the society of nations is, as we should expect, more mature than its legislative department for, as we know, the development of law by custom and through arbiters and judges has almost always preceded legislation in the evolution of governmental organisms. The Permanent Court of International Justice within the past two decades has become a functioning and living body. The Mixed Arbitral Tribunals in Europe and the German and Mexican Mixed Claims Commission operating in the Western Hemisphere since 1919 dealt with a volume of cases surpassing both in number and importance anything hitherto known in the history of international arbitrations. The Mixed Claims Commission, United States and Germany, alone handled over 15,000 separate cases. Several of its single cases or groups of cases involved larger sums and

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graver issues than any other single arbitration to which the United States had previously been a party.

Not less than 130 separate conciliation, arbitration or compulsory adjudication treaties were signed by nations during the single decade which followed the conclusion of World War I, in addition to such general conventions as the Geneva Protocol of October 2, 1924, the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes of September 26, 1928, and the Inter-American Treaties of Conciliation and Arbitration signed at Washington on January 5, 1929. Many of the institutions provided for by these treaties have never actually functioned, but their creation has displayed a widespread determination to substitute ordered justice for brute force.

Six separate drafts of projects for the establishment of an "Inter-American Court of International Justice" submitted to several of the International Conferences of the American States from 1923 to 1936 have been made the subject of a study and report by the Governing Board of the Pan American Union. Useful as these and other developments of international judicial organs have been, they are, with few exceptions, still haphazard in their character. At the Versailles Conference in 1919 I was bold enough to suggest that in addition to provision for a World Court in the Covenant of the League of Nations (whose first draft lacked any such provision) authority should be granted for the creation from time to time of inferior courts—much in the same manner as our United States Federal Courts were established, in order ultimately to create a permanent unified international judicial system.

Any super-sovereign executive power for the Secretariat of the League of Nations was repeatedly disclaimed when the League was founded, and from time to time thereafter. The Governing Board of the Pan American Union also shrinks from admitting that its functions are executive in any super-sovereign sense for the nations of the Western Hemisphere—a fact understandable when it is remembered that the Union traces its origin to a section of the State Department of the United

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States Government, and that its Governing Board still consists of diplomatic representatives of the 21 nations of the Western Hemisphere resident at Washington, D. C. At the Buenos Aires Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace in 1936, attended by President Roosevelt, a resolution was adopted recommending extension of the Union's work. On January 3, 1938 the Governing Board of the Pan American Union approved a comprehensive committee report which said:

> It was the thought of the Founders of the Union that through such cooperation an international atmosphere would be created in which any disputes that might arise, would lend themselves to orderly settlement, through mediation, conciliation or arbitration. It is true that at successive International Conferences of American states an elaborate mechanism for the maintenance of peace has been developed, but the organs for this purpose are not integral parts of the Pan American Union, but may be said to run parallel to it.

Whatever terminology we may employ as to the functions of the Pan American Union or of the Secretariat of the League of Nations, we certainly find not only within those bodies but also within a great many other international organs many of the attributes of administrative and executive institutions. The Bureau of Universal Postal Union has long been a most valuable organ of that character. So have the International Telegraphic Bureau founded in 1868, the Bureau for the Protection of Industrial Property founded in 1883, the Union for Protection of Literary and Artistic Property created in 1888, and various boundary commissions, plebiscite commissions, commissions for the control of navigable rivers, and commissions dealing with air navigation. At one single American Conference—the Seventh International Conference of American States at Montevideo in 1935—eight international commissions were created. All of these organs have, in a sense, possessed super-sovereign attributes and the interests of the nations would best be served by freely admitting it.

If we employ definitions which have long been accepted respecting national governmental organs we can hardly escape

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the conclusion that the "society of nations" does exist, that it is a "super-sovereignty," and that it possesses already a "constitution"—though not a written one in the sense that it is to be found in any single document. The covenant of the League of Nations was the nearest approach to such a document in modern times, though it resembled far more closely the Articles of Confederation of the original American States than it did the Constitution of the United States of America.

Whatever our opinions on this may be, we must face frankly the fact that such government as the society of nations now possesses has proved inadequate to preserve peace and order and to guarantee the rights of the nations. The constitution of the society of nations at best is an infant organism which has not developed the immunity to disease or the vigor which we shall expect of it in its riper maturity.

Rapidly changing social customs inevitably demand changing institutions. The nations of the world during the past few decades have become vast economic organisms. They require, if complete chaos is to be avoided, far more effective instrumentalities of international government than now exist. Such organs must be financially self-supporting, and whenever an effective method to accomplish that is devised we shall be well on our way toward a more stable society of nations. International government should be all-embracing in its concept. The failure of mere alliances and associations for the past 300 years and the experience of two world wars in a single generation (costing per day in money alone more than what should be the normal cost per year of effective organs of government) suggest that we can afford to take daring risks. As former Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes, in his presidential address to the American Society of International Law twelve years ago said:

> The building of the institutions of peace is the most distinctive enterprise of our time. . . . The difficulties do not make the task any the less the supreme task of modern civilization. . . . We shall have to build and rebuild and then mayhap to build again, but the construction process must go on.

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Thought and Life

THOMAS MANN

Translated by David O. Robbins

Editor's note: Under the title *"Denken und Leben"* this article in the German text was published in the Summer 1941 number of *The Virginia Quarterly Review.* Thomas Mann and the *Review* have generously granted THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR authorization to present it in English. In reprinting even in translation an article previously published the editors are making an exception to their general policy for the following reasons: Thomas Mann, recognized in many lands as the most distinguished man of letters of our time, derived the inspiration for this article from the key presented to him on the occasion of his initiation into membership in the Alpha of California Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. [Mr. Mann was also elected to honorary membership in the Zeta of New York Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1939.] In addition to the light it throws upon the central problem of German culture the essay stands as a deeply significant interpretation of the motto of Phi Beta Kappa, "Philosophy, the guide of life," by one who has made it so.—CHRISTIAN GAUSS.

THERE lies before me on a velvet background a handsome ornament, a traveller's prize, a noble possession. It is a small golden plaque with an attached ring, on one side of which, between a triangle of stars and a pointing hand, appear the Greek letters ΦΒΚ. The other side bears the name of the owner, the date 1941, and also the date on which this learned order, which includes all America and whose symbol is this little pendant, was founded. The Society already is 165 years old, and in March of this year I was received into the Chapter at Berkeley. I appreciate this friendly gesture—how could I not?

The ability to appreciate life and what it implies is the chief and fundamental ability of the poet; for to be a poet does not

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mean merely to invent something, but it means to be concerned about things. And on the other hand, to be concerned about things means to think about them. *Thinking* and *thanking*, however, are related words; thinking has much to do with thanking. We are thankful to life by thinking about life.

> "Much to think on, much to ponder,
> In Life's thin-spun thread lies hidden,"

says the Fate in *Faust*—the work of a poet who did not conceive it otherwise than that thought is a gift of thanks from the spirit to life, and that only in spirit does life truly live.

In my gratitude it seems to me that many a strand of thought might be attached to the little gold symbol on my desk. Phi Beta Kappa means PHILOSOPHIA BIOU KUBERNETES —"philosophy, the guide of life." It is a beautiful, significant formula, and highly contemporary, it seems to me, although the century which created it has disappeared. It seems to me to be contemporary because it joins philosophy and *life*, because it sounds the responsibility of philosophy for life, as its guide and master. I might call it a democratic formula, for that high pragmatism which sets the spirit and thought in a relation of responsibility to the life of men—a responsibility for the consequences of thinking for life and reality—is something essentially democratic. The basic reason for the weakness of democracy in Germany and for the present wretched condition of the country does not lie in the political realm; it lies in the psychological and spiritual realm—in the perhaps fundamental and essential lack of that pragmatism which is nothing except the friendship for life, nothing except the spirit's feeling of responsibility for life and for the results of thought in reality, in the social and political life of men.

A short while ago I read an essay by an Englishman, observations on culture and freedom, which does not refrain from criticizing the nature and fate of the German spirit. It is a criticism whose impartiality only makes the more terrible the accuracy with which it probes the wounds I refer to. "I feel,"

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says the author, "for German culture a sympathy which is deep and genuine. But at the same time this feeling of sympathy has always been accompanied by a feeling of despair. It is as though every road taken by German poets and philosophers led to the edge of an abyss—an abyss from which they could not withdraw, but must fall into headlong,—an abyss of intellect no longer controlled by any awareness of the sensuous realities of life."

That is excellent, and it is unnecessary to say to this critic that the "despair," the pain, which the foreign admirer of German culture feels in viewing it, is only too familiar to us who belong to this culture and who stand in its heritage. Every people, however happily, naturally, and self-contentedly it generally accepts and expresses its character, suffers in its spiritual exponents; but among the Germans this suffering is the deepest and most unrestrained, and the British author whom I cited does not fail to give many examples of the "orgies of national self-chastisement" to which great representatives of the German spirit, naturally to the harm of their popularity, have given themselves. The most "despairing" is Nietzsche—and he had reason; for where clearer than in him appears the fate which controls the ways of the German spirit, appears the tendency toward the intellectual precipice at whose edge is extinguished all feeling of the responsibility of thought for its consequences on human realities?

Nietzsche, the originator of the most fascinating and colorful philosophical (or lyrico-critical) production of our age, was personally a tender, complex, deeply passionate artistic nature, a stranger to all brutality and primitive health, a Christian character, if not in the religious then in the personal significance of the word. However, in heroic contradiction to himself he formulated a delirious anti-human doctrine, whose favorite concepts were force, instinct, dynamism, super-humanity, primitive cruelty, the "blond beast," the amoral triumph of life's forces. But sometimes, privately, in his letters, appeared a Nietzsche entirely different from that of his books.

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When Kaiser Friedrich III, the liberal anglophile, died of cancer, the glorifier of Caesar Borgia wrote from Italy to a friend that this death was a great and decisive loss for Germany, for therewith the last *hope of German freedom* went to the grave. That is the simple, natural, and unaffected expression of a spiritual man, who as such loves freedom and is dependent upon it. In comparison to the hectic effronteries of his philosophy, it is the spontaneous and even banal expression of Nietzsche's relation to the reality of life. His doctrine, however, was a romantic intoxicated poem, in the creation of which he had never given any reflection as to how his thoughts would appear in political realization. But his tragically great work contributed harmfully to the downfall of that "German freedom" of which he speaks in his letters.

"*It was never meant thus!*" That is the universally repeated lament of an idea which sees itself materialized. But the beclouding and corrupting of the idea by human realities is something different from the spirit's presumptuous arrogance toward reality, which it boldly and guiltily refused to be concerned with even in the least. Who doubts that Nietzsche would turn in his grave if he could know what they have made out of his philosophy of power? If he were alive, his personal fate would correspond to the simple, spiritual, natural passage of the letter which I mentioned; it would have nothing to do with his doctrine. He, who even during the Kaiserreich lived as an emigré —where would he be today? With us in America, and by virtue of American tolerance would perhaps be honorably received into Phi Beta Kappa!

I do not say this in jest—although naturally to assume to recall into the present someone who is dead must always be a fancy of the mind. The learned group, on whose mysterious Greek-name formula I am expressing my thoughts, is as old as the nation and her freedom; yet even if its name ever could cease to be contemporary, it is contemporary today to an astonishing degree. For all of us the times have sharpened our consciousness of the duty of thought toward life. Philosophy as

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"art for art's sake," as mere unrelated, irresponsible play and adventure of the spirit, appears to us today as a disastrous lack of salutary instinct and a silly wantonness.

Unmistakably the spirit is today in readiness to enter upon a *moral* epoch, an epoch of new religious and moral knowledge and distinction of good and evil. That means a certain simplification and rejuvenation of the spirit in opposition to all weary and skeptical sophistication—that is its way of "rebarbarizing" itself. We have become aware of evil in a form so extremely low and frightful that we have resolved upon the good, in such a straightforward and unironical way that a short time ago it would not even have been counted as "spiritual." Freedom, truth, law, humanity: once more the spirit dares to speak out these words—a venture nobler than their abandonment and derision—and the spirit need be ashamed no longer, as it thought it should be so long as they were taken for granted. Since they are in extreme danger, the spirit has become conscious that they are its daily bread, its breath of life, its life itself, and it realizes that it must fight for them or itself go under.

Philosophy shares the fate of democracy. It is forced to be militant out of the simple motivation of self-preservation. In the world which would be the result of Hitler's victory, in that Gestapo-world of universal slavery, there would be no more philosophy than there would be democracy. There would also be no religion and no morality. Only few, even today, can picture to themselves what a moral catastrophe this victory would mean for mankind. Few can imagine the psychical destruction, the moral wasteland and hopelessness which would result if man were forced to accept as a *fait accompli* the ultimate triumph of evil in the world, the triumph of deceit and force. The impression is still remembered which a mere phenomenon of nature, the great earthquake of Lisbon in the eighteenth century, made on men. This catastrophe of nature cost the Almighty many thousands of believers, for men said to themselves understandably that it was impossible that an omnibenevolent and omniscient God could rule over a world in

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which something so terrible could happen. I dare to assert that this anti-religious effect of the earthquake of Lisbon would be child's play in comparison to the moral destruction and devastation of Hitler's final victory.

Must philosophy therefore subordinate itself to politics, become political itself? I do not say that. What I say is that the problem of humanity is a unity, whose various spheres and forms of expression cannot be separated from one another. It was the fateful mistake of the educated German upper class to draw a sharp line of demarcation between spirit and life, between philosophy and political reality, and from the heights of an absolute culture to look down scornfully upon the social and political sphere. This it is that has brought the civil spirit in Germany to its present degradation.

"Philosophy as the guide of life" means also life as the point of direction and guiding star of philosophy. The most recent and still fashionable exaltation of "life" at the expense of spirit was a folly; and no less is the sterile and loveless self-satisfaction of the spirit at the expense of life. Totalitarian politics is a filthy deviltry. The true totality, which we oppose to it, is that of mankind.

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The American Student as I See Him

GILBERT HIGHET

THE American scholar I have long known and long respected. The American student I met first as an ambitious but depressed graduate working in the hard Scottish medical schools; then as an exotic graft on Oxford's gnarled trunk (like Vergil's tree, "admiring strange new leaves and fruit unlike her own"); and finally in several of the great universities of his own country. I like studying him, and he, by now inured to the fads of his preceptors, supports with surprising affability the endless process of being studied.

As far as I can judge, he is unlike any other student in the whole world. For one thing, he often works three or four hours a day at some job which is at least extra-curricular, if not extramural. My friends at St. Andrews and Glasgow were often poor—much poorer than the freshmen whom I see cheerfully filing clippings or toting luncheon trays—but in term-time they never worked at anything outside their studies. The vast mythology of Scottish education is full of stories about the crofter's son who lived all term in half a room on a barrel of oatmeal and a barrel of herrings brought from home, and then walked a hundred miles back to Inverquharity with the gold medal. And that ideal still persists. Occasionally British and French undergraduates do a little tutoring, and a dozen or two are book-shifters in the libraries or demonstrators in the labs; but they don't *work*. James Joyce's miserable Stephen Dedalus in Dublin, drinking watery tea and eating fried bread while he fingered his parents' pawn tickets, would have been far better for a decent meal earned by honest work.

But it is not, or seldom, done. The feeling is that it would

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interfere with real work and equally real play: that it would keep the undergraduate from having his full share in the life of the university. And there is some truth in this. To spend three or four hours a day on something wholly unacademic nearly always narrows the student's interest in his academic work. He is apt to feel that it too can be done in the same way: two lectures, four hours at his job, four hours' study, and then stop. This therefore is one of the reasons why so few undergraduates in the universities here aspire to honors, compete for prizes, carry their interest in their courses further than the term paper. In France and Britain, on the other hand, it is common for lecturers to get notes from their undergraduate hearers questioning some statement, seeking a reference, asking for extended treatment of some difficulty. A not very intelligent pupil of my own at Oxford handed me a verse translation of six idylls of Theocritus, which he had made in his spare time during the two winter terms; in Jules Romains' *Les Hommes de Bonne Volonté* a student at the École Normale Supérieure translates and annotates the choric odes of Sophocles, just for fun; and, at all the British universities, essay and poem competitions are nearly always burdensome to mark, there are so many competitors. But they would not have the energy, or even the interest, to do all that, if they had to manage a laundry agency for four hours a day.

The American student himself feels this; for when he becomes a graduate student, a radical change comes over him—a change far greater than the corresponding change in other countries. He will doggedly set himself to read and classify every Elizabethan sonnet, or memorize every decision arising out of the Snite Act; he will plunge into labyrinthine bibliographies, from whose depths he can be heard faintly crying, as if he battled with unseen monsters, and from which he emerges through the gate of ivory, pale but uplifted, like Aeneas from the world of the dead; and when you and I make jokes to him, he will copy them and write "laughter" in the margin. It is scarcely too much to say that he then feels himself for the first

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time to be a whole-time student; and the only thing to be regretted about this metamorphosis is that it often keeps him from being a whole-time member of the university, that he is so often debarred by it from games and societies and other junior academic activities. He feels, not without a certain justice, that he is paying for the comparative diffuseness of his undergraduate days. There is another way of putting this. No European country thinks that education is, or ought to be, wholly democratic. Not even the United States does, in the last resort—for, in awarding fellowships and scholarships, its universities base their distribution not on *need* but on *achievement*. The principle of competition, thus tacitly acknowledged, is carried much further in Europe. In France[1] the A. B. examination is a national contest, whose winners are rewarded not only with the civic tributes which the French know so well how to dispense, but with prizes, money, trips to Cambodia and certainty of a favorable start in their careers. The bad side of this is obvious—suicides are not at all uncommon among disappointed or overworked candidates, and a man's whole life can be darkened by a sense of his own inescapable inferiority, publicly and competitively demonstrated. But it makes the students read, and read hard. All scholarships in Britain (except a very few assigned to localities or family names) are awarded on the basis of a long and difficult competitive examination. And there are very many more scholarships there than there are in this country: scholarships are endowed and awarded by cities, counties, prep schools, "public" schools, colleges, universities, alumni societies, guilds and national associations. Besides those, there are hundreds upon hundreds of rich scholarships dependent on the wills of long-dead benefactors. I went through one university on money left by a thread manufacturer who died about 1850, and through another on the rentals of farms bequeathed for the purpose by a Court official of King James the First. It would not

[1] This refers of course to France before it was invaded by the Germans, and before its government determined to assist its conqueror in attaining his own ideal, *die Vernichtung Frankreichs*, "the destruction of France."

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be too much to say that the rich man who, in the United States, gives $50,000 for cancer research, gives £10,000 in Britain to support "a student who desires to enter the medical profession, said student to be selected by an examination on the fundamentals of . . . ." The University of Oxford is thought to be full of the leisure class. Yet in 1937 60 per cent of its students were wholly or partially supported by scholarships; and all those scholarships had to be won by keen and difficult competition. From a certain Scots university there is one, and only one, scholarship which will take you to Oxford; and it is competed for by every student who wants it: pre-lawyers, chemists, historians, economists, mathematicians, philologists, they all sit there glowering at one another in the same examination room, and furiously laboring at the twelve three-hour papers on which their future depends. It is a painful ordeal; but it makes you study! Not only in France but in Britain too, enormous emphasis is laid on the exact position of a student in his class. Those who simply collect their grades and their clubs and leave are little regarded; must, practically speaking, have jobs waiting for them; find the higher careers closed. Those who try for honors find themselves arranged into a natural hierarchy, which, *ceteris paribus*, represents their comparative chances of getting a good position when they graduate.

The American student, if I know him, would not care for this system. He would, I think, feel that it too highly rewarded the "grind" and undervalued the character-building and social qualities of college life; he would conclude it was unfair to boys who happened to attend schools which gave them less careful preparation for academic competition; ultimately he would think that, by subjecting him to a constant implied pressure, it deprived him of a good deal of his liberty. And yet, it seems to me that it would do him good, and improve the service of schools and universities to individuals and to the state.

Take only one broad consideration. The development of government all over the world, in the democracies as well as in the despotisms, is towards a more numerous, more elaborate, and

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more highly trained bureaucracy. For good or bad, every national government now interests itself in the lives of its citizens far more closely than at any time since the Byzantine empire. Therefore it is necessary, year by year, for it to command a great supply of diverse and well-trained officials, mostly specialists of one kind or another. In the despotisms these officials are produced by the Party machine, selected and trained by a system which is at least methodically similar to education. In the democracies they are at present produced and trained by no system, except in a few fields like jurisprudence and public health. In Great Britain the diplomatic service, the higher branches of the civil service, and certain other administrative departments are recruited by rigorous competitive examinations for which, in practice, candidates prepare throughout the universities and even during their last years at school. That system is thought to work well, although it is limited in extent. But many educators feel that the bureaucracies, both local and national, ought to be wholly staffed by men and women trained *on purpose*, and that in the democracies the schools and universities ought to be the organizations which produce and train them. Many a large store will not engage salesmen and saleswomen unless they are college graduates with noticeably good records; it is ludicrous that states and colleges should be less careful about choosing their executives. If we are to have a mandarinate, let us be as sensible as the Chinese in selecting our mandarins. If we want intelligent officials let us train them and discipline them and sift them by competitive examination and reward them with good, appropriate jobs, instead of letting our universities annually pour out a huge undifferentiated mass of graduates, from which only luck or exceptional perseverance will direct the right man to the right place in the social machine.

However, at present that is not done; and the American student, except in a few eccentric universities, estimates his achievement by time spent, which is quantitative, rather than by competitive achievement, which is qualitative. And yet he

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is at heart emulous. If it is presented civilly and winningly to him, he will welcome authority. He would welcome it still more if it were organized: if he felt that in school and at college its consistent purpose was to make him fit for a career which depended not entirely on his own whim, but on a long series of tests of his abilities and a constructive estimate of his character and capacity.

Another unique attribute characterizes the American student: his huge numbers. Can four real universities exist in one city? Can it be possible that in one state fifty or sixty thousand youths and maidens are capable of the activity required to absorb a university education? Are the inhabitants of California (whose very name derives from a romance describing the Earthly Paradise) so talented that they can every year produce a myriad of university graduates? And what educators could be at once so inspiring and so industrious as to teach, effectively, this enormous horde? Or, finally, can the vast multitudes of adolescents in the United States all be so much more talented than their coevals in Canada, in France, in Sweden?

The paradox, of course, conceals a dichotomy. To put it bluntly and generally, the American student who is not preparing for a profession does not often go to the university in pursuit of higher education. He goes to complete the education which his school left incomplete. He has been badly schooled. It is not his fault, and not wholly the fault of the school. But it is a pity. It sometimes strikes me with a sense of pathos to read the grave works on education, ranging all the way from Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book* to the bulletins of the Carnegie Institute for Educational Research, which treat the American school system in total detachment from all others, as if it could learn nothing from Europe, and teach Europe nothing—still less other continents. Mr. Adler, in his efforts to teach his patients how to read books, makes one or two cursory references to the situation in Europe, and throughout the rest of his prescription treats the American student as a chimera bombinating

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in the void. But of course he finds it difficult to read Locke or Dante when he gets to college. He has seldom been compelled to read anything difficult in school. And a comparison, however invidious, would demonstrate that. I went to a perfectly ordinary school in Scotland, P.S.93 as it were. In my last three years (ages 15-18) we were forced to read and understand *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV*, Chaucer's *Prologue* and *Knight's Tale*, *Polyeucte*, *Le Cid*, *Le Misanthrope*, *Eugénie Grandet*, *Seven Against Thebes*, *The Persians*, *Iliad* XVI and XVIII, *Aeneid* II, IV, and VI, Livy IX and several other books. And we read them. (Dickens and Scott and Thackeray and so on, we had read long before.) We had to, under that stringent discipline. We could write a character of Macduff or Célimène, we could reproduce the various explanations and emendations of the "dram of eale" in *Hamlet*, we could compare the shields of Achilles and Aeneas, we could write little essays on Balzac's idea of realism. They were not very good; but they proved that we had read the books. And we were not alone. In Edinburgh they were doing the same. Bristol Grammar School was doing even more. Sheffield and Manchester and London and Newcastle were doing at least as much. French schools are still more arduous, although they concentrate more closely on the classics of their own tongue; and so, in a more limited way, were Scandinavian and Dutch schools, and even German schools before the despotism.

Now why does the average American student need to learn how to read a book? Why does he approach *Hamlet* or *Crime and Punishment* with a mixture of awe and bravado, and usually look up from it with such puzzled delight and half-understood emotion? Manifestly because he has been ill taught at school. And, so far, that is nobody's fault: certainly not his; but there are two main reasons for the fact.

For one thing, the system of mass-education has nowhere else been applied to a population so huge and so various. Only a nation so gallant and so confident as the United States would have dreamt of administering approximately the same educa-

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tion to the children of long-settled western Europeans, recent central European immigrants, and many millions of emancipated Negroes, of whom Bigger Thomas with his revolt and his tragedy may well be partially symbolic. Whenever I ask my pupils about their schooling they invariably say, if they went to public school, that they were held back by the size of the classes or by lazy and recalcitrant classmates. One of the best students I have ever had praised the history master at his public school most highly, but added that he was forced to devote himself almost wholly to the upper one third of his class. In one of his more frankly autobiographical essays Mr. James Thurber describes a tough school in Columbus, Ohio, as it was a generation ago; and even if we allow for humorous exaggeration there is still the ring of truth in the sentence about his enormous Negro protector, Floyd: "I was one of the ten or fifteen male pupils in Sullivant School who always, or almost always, knew their lessons, and I believe Floyd admired the mental prowess of a youngster who knew how many continents there were and whether or not the sun was inhabited." And the problem is complicated by the almost inevitable rigidity of the school system. It is true that many high schools have recently endeavored to work out special courses of study for pupils who are more intelligent than the average; but such readjustments are not yet common, are nearly everywhere tentative, and often meet with opposition. It is a task of almost inconceivable difficulty to raise the educational standards of an entire population; for at least two thirds of the boys and girls now leaving American schools are much more highly educated than their parents were. This difficulty does not exist in western European countries, and it fills me with admiration to see the courage and tenacity with which it is being faced here. But, in education more than in other things, each generation stands on the shoulders of its predecessor, and in another decade or so a great part of this difficulty will have been removed.

The other reason is the comparatively lax discipline of schools in the United States. High school pupils spend appre-

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ciably less time in school here than they do in Britain, and much less than they do in France. In school they spend less time on actual study, because of the surprising amount of attention paid to extra-curricular activities. They spend far less time on preparation at home. And there is much less *drive* behind their learning than there is in western European schools. In the last two years at an ordinary British city school, corresponding to a good high school here, the ordinary pupil averages at least five and a half hours of actual classroom work in school and three hours' preparation at home, with a minimum of six hours' preparation at week ends. The working hours of two good provincial lycées in France, where friends of mine taught during the early '30s, are literally almost double those of an American high school.[2] Any extra-curricular occupation, like producing the school magazine, or football practice, or rehearsing in the school orchestra, takes place outside working hours. And there is a constant disciplinary pressure to keep the pupils at work, to keep them actively attentive, to pull up the laggards and push on the leaders. Attendances are rigidly kept: an incident such as that reported in the New York papers in 1940, when a squad of policemen and truant officers "combed" the cinemas on two different mornings and rounded up nearly two thousand school children A.W.O.L., is frankly inconceivable. If anything like it occurred in Europe it would be instantly followed by the discharge or demotion of dozens of school teachers. It may not be unfair to suggest that some of the laxity observable in American schools is due to the much higher proportion of women acting as teachers. Adolescent boys cannot be properly disciplined by women, and adolescent girls only with much difficulty. But there are other reasons, which are too well known or too controversial to be discussed here. The fact remains. The American high school student has a far better time, but he does far less work than his European counterpart.

[2] The same system at an earlier date is admirably described by the Abbé Ernest Dimnet in his autobiography, *My Old World* (Simon and Schuster, New York: 1935). Arduous as it was, he has nothing but praise for it.

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Accordingly the American student, when he reaches college, is not so well prepared as the average European freshman. He has not read so much, and he does not know how to read and write so well. He does not buy nearly so many books for his own enjoyment, if indeed he buys any at all. One distinction seems to me particularly significant. English and French undergraduates are apt to publish little magazines in which they practise fine writing: the first sonnet, the first political manifesto, chapters from the first autobiographical novel and so on. The American student hardly ever produces an imitation literary review. Instead, he produces an imitation of a daily newspaper, or occasionally an imitation of a comic weekly. Almost every distinguished contemporary French and British writer wrote his first publishable work when he was an undergraduate; almost no distinguished American writer wrote anything at college which in any way prefigured his later work.

If I have not misunderstood the fairly widespread movement towards establishing "junior colleges" and the frequently emphasized distinction between the first biennium of college work and the second, they are based on this same fact: that some fairly intensive work is required to make up the deficiencies of the schools. Viewed in this light, the multitudinousness of the American student becomes (although still a little bewildering) intelligible and sympathetic.

The third quality which forces itself on the observer of the American student is his freedom. He will, without great heart-searching, move from one university to another—a thing almost never done in France or Britain, and in Germany chiefly by very earnest undergraduates in search of a particular kind of specialized teaching or even of a particular professor. He will give up college altogether with a facility which still amazes me, although the dean's office usually knows exactly what proportion of the student body can be expected to drop out annually. He will in college drop subjects on which he spent four years in school; and he will take eccentric subjects or anomalous

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combinations of subjects with complete nonchalance. He is infinitely less cut to pattern (even allowing for his numbers) than the European student. In an English university it is often possible to tell what particular college an undergraduate attends, and even what school he came from, after five minutes' general conversation; but seldom in the United States.

This has its good side and its bad. It makes the American student far more self-reliant—one of my chief difficulties in Oxford was handling the timid, sheltered, hampered boy who might prove to be brilliant and might almost equally well be defeated and crushed; such difficulties hardly ever present themselves here. But, on the other hand, it makes him rather irresponsible, and even restless and discontented. Far too much is left to his own choice, at a time when he is scarcely capable of making a choice. Thanks to the kindly laxity initiated by President Eliot, he is free to take astronomy 17, comparative religion 1, government 33, Spanish drama in translation 21 and hygiene 2A (hygiene 2A is compulsory). A semester of that would, at best, produce a healthy cross between Sir Isaac Newton and the Duke of Plaza-Toro. It is no wonder that the mixture sometimes fails to act, and discourages him that gives and him that takes. The opposite extreme is seen in the English "public" schools, where a schoolboy good at history will be tutored from the age of fifteen till the age of eighteen to win a history scholarship at a good college specializing in history, will spend three or four years reading history for a first class in the final examinations, and then take history at his examination for entrance to the home civil service. (Usually, he will spend most of his time on the same period of history—e.g. medieval history, with special emphasis on the 12th century.)[3] Both extremes are dangerous. The British extreme is often as narrowing as the other is bewildering: it needs, as an offset, the manifold external interests which only a great university and experienced tutors can give. But it has one merit in itself: it sets a

[3] An interesting document showing one boy's revolt against this system is Christopher Isherwood's autobiography, *Lions and Shadows*, Hogarth Press, London: 1938.

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premium on unremitting hard work and the long view. The other extreme broadens the student's mind; but it often broadens it without deepening it.

Thus it is that the American student in his last two years at school does not often know what he is going to be, and still less often knows what he will learn in his university; and in the first two years at the university (if he is not firmly steered by his parents into a profession) seldom knows how he will spend his junior and senior years, and how they will dovetail into his future. From one point of view, this shows a genuine, disinterested love of learning, a magnificent belief in the virtues of the university; but from another it means waste of good effort, waste of priceless time, waste of irreplaceable enthusiasm. The task of the university is to cast such a light on a man's youth as will illuminate him through his life, and yet to keep the light unblurred by the shadows of the temporary and the inessential. This task is always supremely difficult, but its difficulty is here enhanced by the inadequateness of the liaison between schools and universities and the lack of emphasis on the essentials of education. The schools have more than enough to do. They cannot tackle this job. It is for the American universities to look, like the wise man, before and after: to induce the student to surrender most of his freedom of choice for a more stable set of patterns in education. Wherever such compulsory patterns have been introduced he needs little persuasion to accept them; at Columbia he looks back on the arduous humanities course with feelings of pleasure and gratitude, not unmingled with surprise. He is a good fellow, the American student: he is energetic and ambitious; but he lacks direction, as the young do everywhere. "For," says Thomas Burton, "as he that plays for nothing will not heed his game; no more will voluntary employment so thoroughly affect a student, except he be very intent of himself." And, in these bad days, few of us are very intent of ourselves.

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The Non-Public School in a Democracy

JOHN DE QUEDVILLE BRIGGS

FORTY years ago the standards and curricula of the public high schools were virtually dominated by the needs of those who planned to carry their schooling on into the college level. Many of the high schools could justly pride themselves on doing superb work in college preparation. My own school, the Cambridge Latin School, had as high standards of academic work as I have ever encountered. Not a few of the high schools in smaller western cities earned an enviable reputation for the quality of their college preparatory work, and for the distinguished college records of their graduates. Now, however, the situation has completely changed. There has been a tremendous increase in the enrollment of the high schools—in particular the non-college part of that enrollment. Today, roughly, less than one fifth of the boys and girls in public high schools intend or expect to go to college. Curricula, course content and academic standards are now in general set for the median of the whole group. It is right that this should be so, but it is hard on those who are going to college.

In a recent report of a special committee of the American Council of Education, under the title of *What the High Schools Ought to Teach*, I find the following passage:

> The secondary schools are attempting, as they never did before, to prepare young people for an understanding of the problems of organized society. Since many prospective citizens do not continue their education beyond secondary schools, it seems evident that instruction with regard to society cannot be postponed to the period of college attendance.

Therefore the high school of today attempts to give its boys and

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girls an increasing amount of history, civics, government, economics and sociology. Since high school boys and girls are not very mature it may well be that many such courses are rather weak tea; but, in theory at least, it is better than no tea at all for those to whom the high school offers the last chance to imbibe. If, however, the student is going on to college, he will find there today superb courses in all these subjects—courses gauged for more mature minds; and for him to spend most of his high school time as he does not only takes the edge off the college courses but brings about increasing neglect, if not actual omission, of the fundamentals of languages, mathematics and theoretical science. Too often these fundamentals are cited in condemnatory disparagement as possessing "deferred values," as if deferred values were something felonious. A small boy, rehearsing to tread the boards in a school play, said to his mother, "Mother, I've spent four weeks learning the technique of love-making, and it will never be of the slightest use to me. I'm going to be a bachelor." That groundwork subjects have deferred values is true. So has batting practice. But, unless the freshman year in college is to degenerate into a glorified ninth grade, that groundwork must be laid in the secondary school.

The mathematics suitable for a boy whose schooling is to end with his graduation from high school may well be very different from that which must precede the intelligent study of the calculus which is part of every engineer's training. A course in "practical physics" featuring the attachment of a new cord to an electric iron, the construction of a three-tube radio set, and the disintegration and resuscitation of a decrepit automobile is not without value; it is hardly an adequate introduction to the serious work of an engineering school. The foundations of theoretical mathematics and chemistry and physics and, above all, the fundamentals of languages, requiring memorization, speed and mechanical facility, are easily acquired even in the early high school years. We have a bit of testimony on this subject from the students themselves in the Harvard *Report of the Student Council Committee on Education*, 1939:

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It is unfortunate that college students should have to devote one or two of their courses to learning a foreign language, which they could learn just as well before entering Harvard. Elementary knowledge of a language, like English Grammar, should be considered a tool necessary for college education, rather than a part of college education itself.

It is now a good high school indeed that has the staff and the means to furnish and sharpen these "tools necessary for a college education." Many high school men exhibit little or no interest in offering these subjects; not a few high school men vigorously proclaim their uselessness. Here then, it seems to me, is the greatest opportunity of the non-public school.

With the exception perhaps of certain "finishing schools" for girls, I know of very few non-public schools which interest themselves primarily in non-college boys and girls. It would be interesting to speculate on what such a school might accomplish in the preparation of non-college boys for citizenship. The handful of non-academic boys who crop up in every college preparatory school, to struggle desperately with a curriculum for which their native scholastic aptitude is inadequate, is apt to include some of the finest human material in the school. But in the field of college preparation there are many non-public schools of the highest quality, specializing in furnishing and sharpening the "tools necessary for a college education." Freedom from the administrative restrictions necessary in the conduct of great public school systems is, perhaps, the greatest source of strength in these independent schools. They are free to seek and to train teachers who are scholars in their various fields—men in whom the Lord has put that spark which makes a teacher. The teachers are free to select textbooks and teaching materials which they, individually, may find desirable; free to use such teaching methods as their individual personalities, talents and enthusiasms may suggest. It is true that some boys and girls of outstanding native ability do overcome the real handicap of high school curricula of inadequate content, and go on to do distinguished work in college; but the honest, thorough non-public school, free to plan its courses and its regime as it

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will, with a view to what is to come, has the opportunity to do a better job with its ablest students and a far better job with those of adequate but more moderate scholastic aptitude.

Apart from the academic task these schools are free, also, to set up regimes under which their boys and girls, in close and less formal association, may learn that art of living with one's fellows which is the first requirement of living in a democracy. Experience as a pupil in good public schools and as a teacher in good non-public schools has led me to believe that the oft-cited advantage of contact with the great cross section of young people encountered in the public schools is greatly overrated. In general young people—like their elders—gravitate to their own kind. I use that word deliberately, rather than the word "class" which means something quite different. Clannishness, cliques, and an undesirable aristocracy based on worldly prosperity are not automatically eliminated in a public high school. While the non-public school, viewed superficially, may appear to be much more homogeneous in its make-up, it contains very many kinds of people with widely differing backgrounds. Wisely administered it offers, I believe, actually greater opportunities for learning to live with one's fellows than its great high school neighbor. Selfishness, arrogance and snobbery are not the exclusive prerogative of those who can afford to pay a tuition fee, or of those who have the mental ability to benefit by a college education.

I know, of course, that there exist non-public schools which are mercenary, have low standards, and do not do honest work. In the matter of low standards and poor work they have, alas, plenty of company among their public school brethren. Public school trained myself, I have both admiration and respect for what by and large the public schools have done and are doing. Existing for the greatest good of the greatest number, they inevitably—and properly—have standards and objectives different from the standards and objectives desirable for the college-destined minority. Generally speaking I believe that the non-public school can do, and is doing better college-preparatory work.

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It is not within the scope of this paper to attempt to answer the obvious question: What of the boy of great ability who wants and needs the best of college preparation, and cannot pay the fee the non-public school must charge? At the college level Harvard and Yale, with their generous National Scholarships, are making one approach to an answer to this question. Most of the better preparatory schools are doing as much with scholarships as their limited budgets will permit. But it is too much to hope that scholarship funds in amounts sufficient to take care of more than a very few of these pupils in either school or college can be obtained from private sources. Were these schools to receive from public funds a subsidy for each pupil, to the amount of the cost of his care in his local public high school, their field would be greatly extended and the problem would be almost solved. Incidentally the high school would be relieved of a serious responsibility. But I think these schools should ponder long and carefully before accepting such a subsidy. Public funds could not be accepted without concurrent and increasing restrictions in curriculum content, teacher training and administration. Such restrictions, imposed in good faith and with the best intentions, by people unacquainted with the work in which non-public schools are specialists, might—probably would—in time deprive these schools of much of that freedom in which lies their strength. Possibly this danger might be avoided were the subsidy enabling attendance at a non-public college-preparatory school given to the pupil through his own public school, rather than directly to the preparatory school.

In brief, I believe that the non-public institution can and should make its contribution in a democracy through its freedom, its right and its great opportunity to do its task well and thoroughly; that this opportunity is now greatest in the field of training those young people who can and should extend their education beyond the high school. The non-public school should respect, supplement and cooperate with the public schools; this is an obligation. The right, the obligation and the opportunity are inherent in democracy.

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Germany and a Democratic Peace

HANS SIMONS

FOR the first time since the breakdown of France it has become possible to visualize the future with some confidence. While Germany is still far superior to the forces actually opposing her, there are possibilities in the attack on the Soviet Union which can develop into definite disadvantages for the aggressor; the meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill has opened up potentialities which—if they materialize—can become decisive. The continuing military successes of the German armies therefore appear in a different perspective—the perspective of a prolonged war and a peace not any longer necessarily dependent on what these armies are gaining today or tomorrow. For the first time too since last summer it is possible to discuss a future peace in other than purely defensive terms. To think of a democratic victory is not any longer unrealistic. The risks for the opponents of Germany are still enormous, but to run them is now more than a mere gamble. What it seemed too late to do can still be done in time, and of all the many excuses for inertia one at least—that Germany cannot be defeated—has lost all validity.

The "Atlantic Charter," indicative of this change in the situation, succeeds furthermore in reestablishing democracy's claim on peace as its natural state of affairs. Peace cannot be simply preserved: it has been lost for the whole world because of National Socialist aggressiveness which has made Japanese and Italian conquests part of its own attack. But peace can be recovered and then protected by democratic means. To the extent to which war as a social disease is alien to democracy, it has to be dissociated from the peace which shall restore social health. The promises of the eight points go far in announcing that the future order is going to be built according to the re-

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quirements of such a healthy democratic development, rather than according to the extent of military successes or the urge of vengeance however justified.

Such an attitude is predicated on the defeat of National Socialism. Here is the one phenomenon of the present crisis which is definitely identified with the war, and the one part of the whole present social problem which cannot be left to peaceful methods. It is the germ which has to be killed before the body politic can be nurtured through a period of re-convalescence up to the point where it will resist future infection. Totalitarianism festers upon all the weaknesses of modern society. War under totalitarianism, far from being a healing fever, is only one form of the decomposition which allows the disease to eat farther and farther into every fiber of human life. Whatever the superficial similarities of rearmament and warfare under all regimes, the democratic peoples accept war only as an almost desperate attempt at vaccination before the real contagion occurs. That is the reason for their continuous effort to control the symptoms of illness which are unavoidable; and therefore there exists for them an inescapable conflict between means and ends. A totalitarian regime, on the contrary, by its very nature makes war not only an end in itself but thereby something endless and uncontrollable, of which peace is only a transitory stage, a lull in the battle. This kind of peace can have only two forms: it is outright domination under which warfare is shifted from the international to the domestic scene (such is the "new order" in Europe, Italy's occupation of Greece and Japan's rule in the conquered part of China); or it is a temporary compromise which serves only to prepare the next attack (such was the Munich accord, the German non-aggression treaty with Russia and Italy's gentleman's agreement with Great Britain). Since Italy's claims have become wholly subservient to German interests, and the position of the present Japanese government depends more and more upon German policy, the defeat of National Socialism is also the prerequisite for any settlement in the Near and Far East—if that settle-

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ment is to be one by which conflicting claims are compromised in the interest of future peace rather than disregarded on the strength of present power.

Finally, this present power and the possibilities of its changes and redistributions make a compromise with National Socialism unacceptable as a practical proposition even if it were acceptable on principle. It is impossible for the democratic peoples to maintain during a peace—even if they know that peace to be apparent rather than real—the pitch of preparedness, vigilance and cooperation now forced upon them by war. They would instead have to attempt a return to what for them is normalcy—a situation under which Great Britain would again be left to solve her European problems alone, the British Dominions would relapse into varying degrees of detachment and divergent interests, and the United States would return to an independence which would soon become a dependence on forces beyond its control and alien to its traditions and sympathies. And these forces, on the other hand, would be able to hold their own; to the unavoidably disintegrating alignment of democracies there would be opposed a continental combination which, if not conquered in war, would certainly be left unshattered by a period of peace however precarious. Compromise therefore would be tantamount to defeat—different from it in time and technique but not in result.

Visualizing peace, then, on the assumption of a decisive defeat of National Socialism, one must keep in mind the potential as well as actual strength of the German position. Economically all of Europe has become dependent on Germany; Europe's money is dependent on German accounts, its trade on German clearing, its production on German consumption, and its consumption on German sufferance. Hundreds of thousands of people have been transplanted from one region to another. Innumerable individuals have acquired a stake in Hitler's regime, or in the arrangements made domestically in order to comply with it. To a large extent the reaction to a defeat of the German "masters" will be spontaneous and so violent as to

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defy planning and regulation. But the very crisis growing out of this reaction will offer a unique opportunity for guidance—as a wound, while arousing the healing faculties of the body, will still require the efforts of a skillful surgeon.

Preparation for those efforts demands careful diagnosis of the forces involved and of every change which occurs in their relations. Within limits it is possible, even during the war, to encourage elements whose help may be valuable and to strengthen influences which make for health. Equally important—but beyond the scope of this paper—is an attempt to define how much interference with local and national developments may be necessary in order to lay the essential foundations of a new security. Both tasks are difficult, especially at a time when information is scarce and contradictory and interpretations are influenced by wishful thinking. They form however a very important part of peace preparation, and should be attempted with the same thoroughness with which a military campaign has to be prepared. As a matter of fact the many contacts which may precede, accompany, or follow military action cannot be planned wisely on any other basis.

The one elementary force in Germany which can be helpful for future peace efforts, and which neither propaganda nor other pressure has been able to eliminate, is a widespread longing for peace. The current regime may have succeeded in educating a small "elite" to enjoy danger, violence, cruelty and the comparative stupidity of a life shaped permanently by external events, by commands and enforcements; but a vast majority of the people still prefer a life made calculable by law and order, and reasonable within the limits of one's own decisions. Strange though it seems it was precisely because of such a preference that millions of Germans accepted National Socialism. They believed its promises that a millennium of stability, prosperity and security would follow what had been a long era of uncertainty and confusion. And because during the years preceding the war those promises had been partly fulfilled—there were more and better jobs, rearmament seemed

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to give security, and even terror where necessary enforced a deceptive stability—the present dangers are attributed to the war rather than to the regime. It is widely assumed that everything will be tolerable again when peace returns. If this vast, incongruous and still amorphous group of peace-lovers ever learns to identify the war with National Socialism it will immediately abandon its passive support of the regime for a passive but formidable opposition.

In part identical with the members of this group, in part belonging to far different strata, are those opposed to the war because they no longer know what the fighting is for. It becomes increasingly difficult to explain the war to them as mere self-defense against the British who are, at the same time, pictured on the brink of losing their empire and their island; or as a crusade against bolshevism when Russia was the friend of yesterday. The spreading of the war is ominous because it seems to indicate an extension not only in space but also in time. The older generation remembers the series of victories and conquests which led to the defeat of 1918. For, although the successes this time are even more brilliant and spectacular, they are also leading the German armies still farther away from home. And while men are fighting above the Arctic circle, near the equator, on the Atlantic and deep in Russian territory; while others are waiting on the Spanish border, in Italy, Bulgaria and all the occupied countries; there is a growing uneasiness which manifests itself in a longing for peace rather than victory. The younger generation was ready to make every sacrifice for the kind of easy and quick victory Hitler gained first at home and then abroad. But they find it harder to give years of their lives in a test of endurance than to give their lives for an early decision. If resistance against Germany grows, on the battlefields as well as in the occupied territories, the feeling of isolation in an endless enterprise will become stronger and all those sharing it will form another potential group of a peace party. Its members will be found in every class, including the rank and file of the army.

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Both these still indefinable groups blend into a third one which is still larger and consists of all those whom the war has deprived of a newly-won security: many were drafted into the army from jobs they expected to hold; unknown thousands of people have been evacuated from their homes in bombed areas; millions suffered exposure to the potential or actual danger of air attack; and still more millions have had their private plans and expectations postponed for the duration. When the warrior, the reckless ruler, the gambler and adventurer are in the limelight, one is apt to forget that in the obscurity of daily drudgery perfectly average people still live—or try to live—normal lives. And it is quite safe to assume that they, like ourselves, suffer from bewilderment, hesitation and divided councils, a preference for the easier road and a willingness to take it even at the risk of greater difficulties in the future. Totalitarianism has eradicated these weaknesses of Western civilization in only a very few; when the opportunity arises these weaknesses will play their part in the reactions of all the rest.

The majority of Germans today do not belong exclusively to any one of these groups. Swayed by the events of the war and by influences ranging from government propaganda to personal experiences, they shift from hope to fear, from support to opposition of the regime. For most of them National Socialism is not a genuine faith; their expression of faith in it is only an attempt to satisfy what they believe to be the demands of patriotism—an attitude so complex as to defy adequate definition in this discussion, but the most obvious feature of which is selfishness. The effort of the regime to turn individual and group egoism into national and racial egoism has only partly succeeded. There are of course many true devotees among the followers of Hitler, some of whom are definitely fanatics and others idealists. But what may well be, or at least can easily become, a majority, are tied to the regime by selfish motives for which pre-war nationalism offered a welcome rationalization. If the war does not any longer satisfy private interests and guarantee national security and aggrandizement, then that ma-

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jority will have a welcome patriotic excuse for egoistic complaints and protests.

A similar analysis could be made of the citizens of any warring nation, but it acquires particular importance in the consideration of a nation which has lost the balance of mind still generally regarded as an attribute of civilized men. And if the citizens of such a nation are encouraged in their vacillations, even forced into them by the contradictory actions of their government, it is fair to assume that they are unreliable and unpredictable in their reactions. Their inner dilemma is only a reflection of the confusion caused by the National Socialist government when it exploited real difficulties in order to create artificial ones. More and more Germans are torn between the pride and arrogance of their sense of superiority and the pity they feel for themselves as late comers who must fight for their place in the sun. They have become split personalities, at any moment capable of reactions entirely different from those of the previous moment, able for a time to feel simultaneously the most contradictory emotions. There are brutes and cowards in Germany to be sure, and more of them than elsewhere since brutality against the weaker is officially encouraged; but most of the callousness toward other people's sufferings and most of the unscrupulousness with which the individual German does his share in the war, are forms of a self-centered pomposity only occasionally given overt expression in action. If a shock of sufficient strength ends this strange self-satisfaction, as a defeat is likely to do, an entirely different development becomes possible.

The potential forces which might be set free if Germany does not win the war are more important for us than those groups which can be regarded today as definitely opposed to National Socialism. For the strength of some of these latter lies only in the opposition to them; they will lose a strength indirectly derived from their enemy if the enemy no longer exists. That seems to be particularly true of that group of conservatives opposed to National Socialism either because they feel betrayed by it, or because they regard it as too dangerously

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revolutionary and too definitely vulgar. To rely on them for help in an effort to establish Germany as a democratic order would be like trying to build an army by recalling defeated generals into service instead of drafting new soldiers. This is likewise true of former political Party leaders who, having supported National Socialism as long as they had hopes of retaining at least part of their position and power, were finally disappointed only when they found themselves definitely deposed. Even some of the opposition offered by leaders and members of the churches is of a similar kind. The war has given all these groups an opportunity to range themselves with the regime if only for patriotic purposes. Opposed only to some aspects of National Socialism, and willing to compromise with others, they have disagreed with the government more over matters of the past than of the present and future. And since far fewer Germans are interested in the past, let alone eager to return to it, than foreign observers or early emigrants sometimes assume, the possible influence of all these dissatisfied elements is decidedly limited.

There is, however, a growing new opposition entirely unlike that surviving from former times. Its strength is difficult to appraise, but its existence has been obvious ever since the so-called blood purge of 1934. Developed within the National Socialist Party it is as heterogeneous as the Party itself, and since it accepted the Party "philosophy"—many members did so much more devoutly than the Party leaders—it is more vigorous than any of the older groups. It knows and accepts the technique of totalitarianism and it is therefore more dangerous. But while it may be necessary to take it into consideration as a possible aid in breaking Hitler's personal hold on the Germans —a hold much stronger than that of the Party—it cannot possibly be regarded as representing any democratic influence. Its members differ widely as to explanations of disaffections. They cannot be identified with any social group nor any economic or political interest. But all of them who are activists are also potential terrorists, and therefore equally dangerous for friend

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and foe. To rely on them for anything but tactical reasons would be attempting to expel the Devil with the aid of Beelzebub.

Fortunately both old and new oppositions are with increasing rapidity merging into another group which is already much larger and will ultimately be more important: the group comprising all those who at one time or another were outraged by the regime. From the young Party member forced to participate in the execution of a friend, to the German housewife resettled in Poland who, entering the nursery of her new home, suddenly visualized the Polish children driven from it and could not bear that thought, there is an endless chain of anonymous individuals who learned by experience. They are the relatives and friends of those murdered in concentration camps or police barracks, the people who after years of unconcern suddenly grasped the extent and character of anti-Semitic outrages, the willing admirers of National Socialism who finally could no longer overlook the venality and corruption of local and national leaders, the pious who saw religion reviled, and even the politicians who, believing in the rules of the game, were offended by their cynical breach. They form a multitude whose many motives are arousing a single emotion. If external influences give direction to this animosity against National Socialism it may well develop into an impetus toward something better. For here are the people who feel the loss of freedom, the lack of legal protection, the denial of human rights most intensely. Here are the ones who will be willing to pay a price for their recovery.

But their influence is conditioned by the strength of the representatives and the supporters of the regime. As individuals these men hold the key positions everywhere; nor are they lacking unity because their common interest is their common stock in National Socialism. Some came into power because they joined the Party when it was still difficult and dangerous to do so; others stayed in power because they succeeded in protecting themselves by joining the Party when it was safe. The

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latter will join any group which allows them to do so and protects their vested interests; despicable as they are, they cannot all be eliminated before new men are trained to take their places. The defeat and deposition of the former, however, must be part of the military victory over Germany. As representatives of a totalitarian government they are extremely well-entrenched and cannot be overthrown before the three pillars of their power—the police, the army and the bureaucracy—are destroyed.

These three, by now branches of the Party, are at the same time still entities in themselves. The police has been most thoroughly purged of all elements suspected of political unreliability. But as the younger and more aggressive members have been sent into the occupied territories the more technical and bureaucratic type has made his reappearance in Germany proper. His test will come if he has to suppress large scale riots; and these are out of the question as long as there is no breakdown of essential social functions. Such a breakdown would not result from internal German problems, but depends on enemy action. It seems safe to say that that part of the police not entirely militarized nor integrated into the Party would be willing and able to support any leaders who, after a collapse of National Socialism, offered a rule of law and order in place of chaos. The fate of that great part of the police doing chiefly military duty today will depend on the fate of the Party. Repudiated by the army, as it is likely to be, it would have to disappear with the regime.

The German army has changed its character three times since the last war, and can do so again after this war is over. Owing to the silly terms of the Versailles Treaty it established itself as an almost independent power within the state. The anti-military tendencies of pacifist democrats, power-fearing socialists, and communists believing in a civilian army, allowed it to develop a life of its own entirely unrelated to the realities of the German republic. It became the refuge of the nobility suffering gradual displacement from the civil service, of the

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sons of farmers who found no place in a shrinking industry, and of the many men who abhorred civil life for political, social or purely personal reasons. In spite of its independence this army had no political ambitions, short of the opposition to pacifism and communism which it practised vigorously but preferably in cooperation with the government. It did not support reactionary revolts against the government, nor defend the government against them. It maintained its neutrality toward monarchism as well as toward National Socialism. The only politically-minded general who reached the position of Chancellor was therefore disowned by the army and speedily overthrown. When National Socialism came into power it found the army at its disposal—the older officers with reservations, the younger ones with enthusiasm, but almost all of them eager to maintain their political aloofness. As the professional soldiers were outnumbered by the newly conscripted men the army became entangled in the political struggle, became more closely related to the realities of the new Germany; yet even so for a while it succeeded in remaining separated from the Party. The rank and file preserved its professional pride; in the army even the Party member was a soldier first and foremost.

However the Party finally achieved, by a change of army leadership alone, an entirely different situation. Until the beginning of the war the army came more and more under the influence of the Party. Promotion depended on ability and political reliability from a Party point of view. A new generation of commanding officers accepted National Socialist indoctrination of the soldiers. When the war started, when the army grew still more rapidly, and when large parts of it were geographically removed from Party influences, a new transformation took place. Success in battle became as important a test of a soldier's worth as political conformity, and the army regained much of its independence. But again it does not plan to make any political use of it. It is anti-pacifist and anti-communist as before, preferably in cooperation with the government.

In a country so highly institutionalized as Germany the bu-

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reaucracy comprises a large part of the population. Not only the civil servants, but many leaders in the economic field, every professor and teacher, most scientists and artists, every legally-appointed minister of a church, and even an enormous number of manual workers are *Beamte*, or officers of the state. Their influence is technical rather than political or intellectual. Most of them are conscientious workers, trying to keep smoothly running a machine which they admire for its efficiency and on which they depend for salary and wages. While this is an oversimplification it describes the reality much more accurately than do attempts at a penetrating psychological analysis. Even under National Socialism most of these men and women try to rationalize their economic dependence and intellectual obedience in terms of duty. By far the majority of them would continue to accept leadership willingly and orders obligingly from anybody who controlled the funds for their remuneration. Bureaucratization therefore makes political control easier, for better or for worse.

Compared with these mainstays of political power other groups are far less relevant to our question. Under totalitarianism it does not matter too much whether the farmer is satisfied, the worker contented, the youth enthusiastic, or the opposite. These are vital issues for a democracy; on them may depend its survival or overthrow. But when they have once been answered in such a way as to cause the destruction of a democracy, they are not asked again until the resulting dictatorship loses its grip for other reasons. Then, once more, they become decisive. Whether Germany can have the kind of peace broadly outlined in the eight points of the Atlantic declaration depends largely on the forces of democracy which can be revived within the country. Thus far the answer can be only partly given. Doubtful as one must be of the democratic quality of certain elements within the institutionalized parts of German society, to destroy them would be to strip any ensuing government of all the essentials of its power.

In order to remold Germany's army into a guarantee of the

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country's share in international security it would have to be reduced by careful selection—a task which could not be left to any national government. But as part of the difficult and painful process of demobilization it must be accomplished—and wisely—at the end of the war, for the future peace will be largely contingent upon its successful completion. There is nothing politically anti-democratic in the existence of a military establishment; but since no army can be democratic in itself, all depends on its leadership. In whatever framework national armies will survive, their character, their influence on national and international affairs, will be decided by their commanders. If they are under effective political control—and democracy has developed the means for that—no army can be misused against its own or any other people. Its place in a democratic peace therefore cannot be found by military technicians, as the peacemakers of 1919 assumed, but must be decided by statesmanship.

Yet to whom can this control be entrusted? The only civilian group sufficiently united in work and leisure and active enough in defense of its interests to serve immediately as an instrument of democratic control is labor. The farmer best survives political and social changes, but as an individual and in his individual work. In Germany he has welcomed National Socialism because it brought him the particular security he needed. He will be distrustful of any regime which is under heavy international responsibilities—as every government in Europe after this war is bound to be. The so-called middle class has accepted nationalism and racialism enthusiastically and still consoles itself for its economic disappointments by emotional excesses. But, although the industrial worker has regarded National Socialism as unavoidable and by his passivity has contributed greatly to its success, he has done so under greater pressure and therefore with less compromise than any other group. His organizations are destroyed, but the collective character of his work provides for their physical survival within the factory or plant. The Labor Front is by far the strongest group numerically wherein

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membership does not imply partisanship. Against the intentions and efforts of its administrators it has preserved something of trade-unionism. And thus a change of leadership could immediately restore within it an element of great democratic promise, traditional as well as present. Labor, too, would face international responsibilities with less distrust and more understanding.

Around these forces, which must of necessity establish the new government and guarantee its essential functions, other influences could gradually be strengthened. Churches separated from the state and thereby freed for true international cooperation, groups currently opposed to the regime (if they could be reconciled with a national movement not of their own initiation), the younger generation (if allowed to continue service and sacrifice without continuing to exchange them for freedom and civil rights), experts and managers (if as willing to accept political orders as they have been in the past)—none of them is hopelessly lost as an aid to a democratic peace if that peace does not destroy the basis of their existence. Nevertheless the greatest responsibility for what can be planned and done if National Socialism is defeated lies with forces outside Germany. To that extent again her future will depend on forces beyond her borders.

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Dictator Conductors

DANIEL GREGORY MASON

ANALOGIES, notoriously misleading if regarded as possessing any scientific validity, are often, when handled with due caution, unexpectedly suggestive. Such an analogy, almost inescapable nowadays, is that between political dictators and virtuoso or "prima-donna" conductors. Both these types manage, partly by their own genius but also largely by the indifference and supineness of their publics, to gain despotic power which they then use or abuse to inflate their own egotism instead of for the public benefit. Both paralyze the free growth of culture, which can remain free only under democratic equality of opportunity. Both develop to an excessive mechanical perfection their respective means, political or artistic, while prostituting the ends which alone can give these means value. Both underrate the intelligence of colleagues far excelling them in public service, with effects disastrous to their dupes and often in the long run to themselves. And both are, indeed, so far right in their cynical estimate of their fellow men that their baleful domination does in fact depend on the ignorance, laziness and cowardice of a servile public: enlightened audiences would no more tolerate exhibitionist conductors than self-respecting electorates would endure parasite dictators. Finally, is there not something oddly similar about even their physical appearance? Does not Mussolini posing before his Fascists quaintly echo a picture nearer home—that of certain heroes receiving from the podium the plaudits of the crowd in Carnegie Hall?

"It has not been realized," writes Ernst Bacon in a suggestive article called "Toward a Musical Home-Rule"[1] "that a symphony leadership is not only an artistic chair but a post of

[1] *Southern Literary Messenger*, April 1940.

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civic responsibility." From this misconception flow many evils. First of all, since music literature cannot be read in private—like books—but exists for laymen only as realized in sound, the habit of the dictator conductors of treating it not as a literature, not as an art, not as a supreme human inspiration open to all, but as a medium of personal display, results for all of us in an intolerable impoverishment. We are only beginning to realize this. We still see but dimly the mere parody of a repertory which must result from cutting out all less sensational works in favor of a few "sure-fire hits." What an insufferable bore it is becoming that every program has to contain *Scheherazade*, or the *Pathetic*, or the *New World Symphony*, or *Daphnis and Chloë*, or one of the dozen or so standbys repeated *ad libitum*, *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*! Meanwhile the less sensational works of even the same composers—Tchaikovsky's delightful suites, for instance, or Dvorák's Slavonic Rhapsodies, now never heard—are automatically excluded. The simple experiment of thumbing over a season's programs of twenty years ago, comparing its variety with the stereotype of today, will enable anyone to realize the lamentable impoverishment of symphonic literature by "showmanship."

But this is only the beginning of our troubles. For even the hackneyed repertory the exhibitionists choose to perform at all they *deform*—in order to make it more striking. By ill-related or capriciously altered *tempi*—breaking a great masterpiece into a litter of scattered fragments; by insensitiveness to style—making Bach as luscious as Wagner or Schubert as bloodless as Debussy; by exaggeration of every nuance; by reckless abuse of the *vibrato*; and even by alteration of texts, they degrade all music. In their hands each note of the cello melody in the Adagio of Brahms's *Second Symphony* is given a separate bow-stroke so that instead of a noble utterance it becomes a series of excited exclamations. The somber chorale at the end of his *Third Symphony* is pointed up with a couple of extra trumpets, so that even Rimsky-Korsakoff could not have made it more brilliant—nor less Brahmsian. The relentlessly even-paced

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peroration of the Franck symphony, in which earlier themes pass before us in majestic review, is made so elephantine at the start and so epileptic at the end that it might as well be a circus parade. Even Beethoven is not dramatic enough—or rather say melodramatic enough: one of the breathless moments in his Pastoral Symphony is the sudden interruption of the gay peasants' dance by that strange, utterly unexpected low D-flat of the basses, ominous of the coming thunderstorm. But surely, to delay it by a *silence*, as if the dancers stood on one foot awaiting the thunder, is to attempt to gild the lily, and instead to turn the sublime into the ridiculous.

It begins to dawn upon us, however, that all this wild exaggeration of conductors may be in some measure a response to our own low tastes, and that our analogy may therefore reveal itself as a boomerang returning from our leaders to ourselves—in short, that perhaps there can be neither dictators nor showmen conductors unless there is first a servile public. Is there any truth in this horrid thought?

Some years ago the present writer tried to show[2] that the primary responsibility was the leaders', and that sensationalism in conductors directly produces indifference in audiences, on the principle of the boy who was always crying "Wolf"; and it does seem as if the lethargy of a numerous portion of the concert public might be due to this systematic destruction, by constant exaggeration of the parts of the musical experience, of the beauty of the whole—the only permanently satisfying element in art. The great and continuing popularity of Toscanini would seem to bear this out: almost alone among the virtuoso conductors he hardly ever allows the pursuit of mere brilliance of the *body* of the music, to which his technical interest naturally leads him, to destroy the larger beauty of the whole which is its soul; he is always strictly loyal to the structure of every piece he plays. And he thus seldom infuriates the more musical minority by those distortions which lead them to give

[2] In his essay on "Sensationalism and Indifference," in *The Dilemna of American Music*, Macmillan, New York: 1928.

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a wide berth to all concerts, broadcasts and records conducted by his less musical fellow-virtuosi. Both these reactions, it may be added—both the lethargy of the thoughtless majority and the distaste of the more perceptive minority—seem to carry out the analogy we have been suggesting with inadequately democratic populations.

But there is evidently more to it than this. There is evidently in the mass of the public a powerful support for sensationalism, not only negatively by indifference or lethargy, but positively by actual preference for "sonorities," sensations and personalities to musical beauty. Is it not sadly evident, in fact, that the vast majority of every audience are only too willing to sacrifice music itself, as an integrated art and a profound emotional experience, to the fireworks offered them by admired stars? Nor, sad as it is, is this condition really surprising. Men dread liberty, as Bernard Shaw has pointed out, because of the bewildering responsibility it imposes and the uncommon alertness it demands. Hence most of us sidestep responsibility in the concert hall as in the political arena, and develop as little in one as in the other alertness to penetrate through shams to truth and beauty.

In the exacting process of self-education we unfortunately get little help from those who should be our guides, philosophers, and friends: the professional critics. For the most part they fall in with our childishness and flatter rather than challenge our servility. It is disappointing, for example, to find even so supple-minded a critic as Virgil Thomson of the *Herald-Tribune* acquiescing by implication in the esthetics of sensationalism. In an otherwise revealing study of Stokowski he writes: "The most beautiful interpretation in the world is only another version of a classic text. A beautiful fortissimo, a smooth, deep unity of string tone, a really well graded diminuendo, are contributions to the musical wealth of nations." In other words the body is more important than the spirit—which is precisely the fallacy through which our dictator-conductors menace our musical life. Mr. Thomson's colleague, Robert

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Lawrence, penetrates far nearer the truth when he comments on a broadcast in which even Toscanini (always less happy than Bruno Walter in romantic music) was misled:

> Everything glittered, giving off the peculiar luminosity and savor of a *specialité de la maison.* . . . But to what avail, other than bizarre astonishment, were the unison cascades of the sixteen solo violins in the Vieuxtemps? . . . Rhythmically Mr. Toscanini triumphed, energizing the entire symphony with his vital beat and firm structural sense. But, we murmur, this was not Franck. It lacked the essential elements of his style, the mysticism and poetry. . . . One basic question arises: How much of this program was music, and how much of it technical perfection?

If the temptation to virtuosity, however, proves so nearly irresistible even to Toscanini—not only the greatest of the virtuoso conductors but in his best moments rising quite out of their class into that of the loyal and inspired musicians, that of the Weingartners, Karl Mucks and Bruno Walters—where in our chaotic musical world shall we hope to find influences capable of restraining virtuosity for the sake of music, of subordinating sensation to beauty, of curbing dictatorial tyranny in order to develop democratic opportunity? This is the crucial question on which the future of our music depends. Its inherent difficulties are aggravated by our complete lack, in music, of such critical standards as do to some extent guide the parallel worlds of literature and the plastic arts. Yet unless we can find hopeful answers to it no constructive conclusions are possible, the present chaos must continue, and we might as well spare ourselves the trouble of making destructive preliminary analyses like the foregoing—we might as well resign ourselves to our fate.

Fortunately the outlook is not quite so hopeless as that. First of all we must remember how disproportionately publicized are the dictator conductors by their commercially motivated managers, by the press, and by the notoriety-seeking majority of the public. They are thus enabled, often for a long time and most prejudicially to our musical culture, to eclipse in the

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public eye men essentially far greater musicians than they. We have quite recently had an example of this in the slowness with which Walter, one of the greatest living conductors but too true an artist to make any concessions to sensationalism, has made his way to the supreme favor he is now, fortunately for us, on the way to enjoying. Somewhat similar has been our tardiness in appreciating another great but quiet European—Otto Klemperer. Our own limelights blind us to the worth of men too modest to strike poses in them. Still more unaware are we of a whole group of men who are doing still more fundamental work for our musical culture. All over the country devoted musicians uncontaminated by the virtuoso virus—men like Frederick Stock in Chicago, Pierre Monteux in San Francisco, Karl Krueger in Kansas City, Eugene Goossens in Cincinnati, Paul Lemay in Duluth, Franco Autori in Buffalo, Howard Hanson in Rochester, to name only a few—are doing pioneering work to create in many provincial cities audiences capable of democratic judgment of music. Such audiences are being equipped to perform the fundamental artistic process described with his usual irony by Ernest Newman when he says that it takes a long time for the good composers to be discovered, and for the bad ones to be found out. Such audiences, despite their disheartening deference to metropolitan snobberies, are slowly building up an American musical culture. How petty and tawdry they make all the dictators look, by obliging us to contrast them with real musical leaders like the late Ossip Gabrilowitsch, for example, who, spending his best years in an industrial city of the Middle West, brought it to such a true musical consciousness that no one who heard his performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in Detroit can ever forget it. To see the great audience drinking in that noble music was to realize the immeasurable potentialities of democracy in the concert hall.

Next to the musician-conductors as emancipating influences we must place, despite all misuses, the mechanical aids, radio and records. Neither of these, it is true, especially radio, has

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been able to escape the blight of commercialism, propagating as it always does between producer and consumer the star-slave relation. Radio, aside from the trash with which it daily pollutes the air, chooses even its real music largely on a basis of glamorous personalities and program familiarity, thus reproducing for its dangerously wider public the same old concert-hall distortions. Yet even on the radio a shrewd listener can find, particularly from the non-commercial stations such as WQXR and WNYC in New York, a good deal of less familiar and standardized music, giving him a chance to experiment in forming his own taste.

Decidedly wider is the margin of freedom afforded us by records. The conventionalizing influence of commercialism is here less coercive than in radio, even if present in subtler forms than we at first realize. Here it works, exactly as in the concert-hall, first to narrow the repertory and then to sensationalize whatever repertory remains. Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande Suite*, for example, far more beautiful as music than Debussy's so much more famous opera, is obtainable only in an old and incomplete recording. D'Indy's lovely *Summer Day on the Mountain* cannot be had at all. Neither can the most beautiful of Franck's three *Chorales* for organ—the second in B minor. Meanwhile all the hackneyed "best seller" symphonies—Tchaikovsky, Brahms, Franck, Dvořák—continue to be over-dramatized by Koussevitzky or over-scored and distorted (though magnificently recorded) by Stokowski.

Yet in spite of all this the world of records is on the whole less standardized than that of either radio or concerts. English and European recordings may supplement the narrow American catalogue. Adventurous small non-commercial groups leaven the big lump with experimental records. The owner of a phonograph can dodge the rubber stamps a bit, has some of the kind of freedom so exciting to anyone who can read a book, and is to some extent similarly put on his mettle to discover and judge his music for himself.

Finally these resources of radio and records may be com-

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bined, in school and college, with the enfranchising power of class-room work, especially of free discussion; and when this can be led by teachers not confined to a merely scientific or "musicological" routine (unfortunately just now too much the fad of the moment) but inspired by a humanist enthusiasm for beauty, the results can be educative in the best sense. We discern here, in fact, the greatest, if the slowest, of all potential means of dethroning the dictators and setting up in their place each man's own enlightened taste. In a class in quartet analysis in one of our New York universities the teacher, about to play the record of the Franck Quartet, in which Mischa Elman had sentimentalized almost beyond endurance one of Franck's noblest, simplest phrases, asked himself whether he should warn the class beforehand to be on the watch for it. Looking over the eager, alert faces, he decided to say nothing. The phrase came, and the class burst into spontaneous laughter. What promise of democratic sanity of taste was in that hearty laugh, how menacing it would have sounded had any musical dictators had the opportunity (or the wit) to hear it!

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Public Speaking in Paint

JEAN CHARLOT

IN A world clogged with easel paintings a nostalgic memory still lingers of past art periods when painting was a communal need and murals were the norm. On the strength of this feeling mural revivals have been spasmodically staged. Around 1850 the Prince Consort imported to London some Italian muralists to decorate his palace; young English painters were impressed, art magazines prophesied that true fresco would soon be staging a comeback. Later on France tasted in the murals of Puvis de Chavannes as much of the qualities of fresco as can be translated into the oil medium. We experience today another "renaissance" of sturdy make, blown over the border from Mexico.

A mural painting is far from being an enlarged easel painting. Critics agree that there is a mural style, that it involves a composition, a drawing, a modeling and a color that may be called specifically mural. I should like in this article to review those characteristics and to show how they are based, not so much on personal idiosyncrasies as in the case of contemporary easel painting, as on objective physical laws concerning chiefly architecture and optics. If I use throughout as interchangeable the terms "mural painting" and "fresco" it is not that I am unaware of their different meanings; but, desirous of comparing mural and easel modes, I naturally choose to speak of murals *par excellence*—that is, murals in true fresco. For the same reason I take it for granted that I treat of murals of great size, because small ones do not branch sufficiently away from easel status.

When Leonardo, in a diatribe perhaps directed against Michelangelo, exalted the painter's craft for being daintier than that of the sculptor, he overlooked fresco painting. But

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Michelangelo, lying on his back on the mammoth scaffold of the Sistine, with lime, sand and paint dripping from his beard, must have been quite as dirty then as in his most dust-raising moments with mallet and chisel. His own distinction, that in painting fresco alone is a man's job, may be taken as his retort to Leonardo. Truly the man that sits on a scaffold many feet high, and matches the strength of his brush against a mortar of lime and sand chemically tied to the very structure of a building, thinks differently from a man seated at an easel timing the swing of his brush to the elastic bounce of a canvas.

The easel painter may, following his impressionist leanings in search of a *motif*, plant his easel in a landscape alive with birds and cows; if he fancies classicism his work may send roots into the non-geometric curves and non-arithmetical proportions abstracted from the human body; or, if a romantic, his work may emerge from the dark recesses of his brooding. But the postulate from which the mural painter starts is not of his own choice; he is bidden to work inside the mineral landscape sung by Baudelaire, where organic forms and the "*beau désordre*" of nature or of passion have given way to a rational order, grooved to architecture. Architecture, as its habitat, conditions mural painting.

A building is planned not only as an organism valid in itself, similar to the animal body which does not imply a witness, but also to the scale of its human parasites. The relationship between architectural elements is governed both by "abstract" esthetics and pragmatic requirements. Buildings are made not only of stone and brick, mortar and steel, but of air; their walls, like the wall of the ribs, define recesses reserved for vital functions; their porosity is both the internal porosity of a lung full of air, and an outer porosity, a breathing relationship which windows and doors achieve between the building, the landscape, and the world.

Regardless of superficial "embellishments," the severity with which buildings are planned is comparable in the realm of painting only to the most radical of abstractions, especially

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those of Piet Mondrian. The people who expostulate heatedly at the rigid verticals and horizontals that Mondrian lovingly rules on his canvases would blow sky-high if a similar rigidity and exclusive use of 90-degree angles failed to be stressed in the plan of a building. The rectangular shapes of the two-dimensional painting in three-dimensional architecture become parallelepipeds, those rigidly cubistic creations within which even conservative people make it a point to be born and to die.

Sensitive to the architectural blueprint that has become his world the born mural painter, following a kind of mimetic logic, bids to complete in illusion what the architect has begun in truth; taking naturally to ruler, square and compass, he will add painted perspectives to the built construction, open or stop the vistas and culs-de-sac that doors, windows and walls initiate. If architecture is frozen music, the structure at least of his fresco will be articulated in musical terms—that is, as mathematical abstraction; the issue of subject matter, make-believe and propriety will be superseded by concern for numerical laws, chords of numbers transformed into clusters of proportions, colors, values.

The depiction of actual architectural elements accounts for a major area in great mural paintings. The background of Leonardo's "Last Supper" is his excuse for painting the picture on the wall. Giotto, Fra Angelico, Signorelli, are all adepts at the wiles of the house painter; with paint they match wood grain and marble veins, the bulge of pilasters, the recession of cornices. It is not only those make-believe architectural elements that cement the union of painting and architecture, but all lines and volumes that partake of geometry acquire in a mural functions proper to architectural members. Ruled on a wall, a vertical line not only obeys optical demands, but upholds as does a column; a horizontal is a level certified by the junction of air bubble and sight-line, rather than the far-flung horizon it suggests in a landscape; the arc of a circle obeys the pull and stress to which arches and buttresses submit, rather than obeying the freehand swing it implies on canvas.

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Painters who use geometric forms undiluted work thus in a certain mural climate. Picasso, Léger, would acquire renewed validity if transposed into murals. The painted constructions of Poussin beg to be reinforced by a permanent architectural setting. Mural geometry can be as obvious as it is in Byzantine mosaics or in Gleize; it might also be revealed secretly, as bones are suggested by flesh. Invisible axes pierce the cylindrical bodies that Seurat paints, and inner plumb lines hang from the tip of the conical personages of Piero. In Giotto's "Lamentation" the disciples suffer an architectural metamorphose; they become columns when they stand, buttresses and arches when they stoop. In his "St. Francis and the Birds" the trees are spheres dense and full at the top, sturdy enough to receive the weight of the ceiling. Thus all subject matter, inorganic and organic, conspires in a kind of architectural charade. Even the gesticulations of El Greco follow the secret and severe rhythms he learned in his youthful apprenticeship with Cretan muralists. Even the lushness of Rubens swells or narrows according to a circular or spherical logic, as if the thrust and pull to which the construction submits were featured in place of the construction itself.

Buildings are made of spaces and volumes. Painting likewise deals with volumes and spaces. The spaces that the muralist paints acquire also architectural definition. There is fitness when the space enclosed between the walls of a given room opens into a painted space similarly limited and ordered. Perhaps it is the "open window" illusion, the unlimited space inherent to impressionism, that makes it unfit as a mural language. Ordered space develops by sliding in depth the front plane that constitutes the painted area. This plane may rotate backwards around one of its vertical sides, creating a triangular recess like that existing between a door frame and a door half-swung, as in the "Embrace at the Golden Gate" of Giotto or the "Bishop Cabañas" of Orozco. More often the plane of the picture recedes to a position parallel to its starting position, becoming the back drop of its own shallow stage; a cube of space is created,

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as if an open box were lying on its side, its opening flush with the picture itself. It is such defined space that gives a monumental feel to Seurat, whose "Grande Jatte" is after all a mural in search of a wall.

A painting can be said to consist of soul and body. In easel painting the body is the canvas stretched on a wood frame and coated with pigment; in fresco it is a mixture of lime, sand and pigment, tightly packed against inner strata of lime and sand backed by the cement, brick or stone constituting the thickness of the wall. At the finger tips of the blind, or bumped against in the dark, the body of a picture is made manifest yet does not function as painting. It releases its meaning only when reflected in the eyes and brain of a spectator. The circumstances that condition this soul, this unsubstantial image through which physical picture and human eye make contact, differ as much in easel painting and fresco as do the physical qualities of canvas and wall.

Easel pictures are conceived as though surrounded by total vacuum. If you cease focusing on the illusive space within the frame and become conscious of the wall or the drape on which the picture hangs, the illusion vanishes. The old-fashioned way of exhibiting pictures on an easel served excellently this need for an unfocused background. Cowed by tradition, the onlooker standing at the proper distance centers his line of vision on the center of the picture, at right angles to its plane. One sees in museums how visitors, obeying a posthumous call, approach close to a Van Eyck or walk further from a Rembrandt, until they stand on the one spot from which the artist guarantees the illusion. The more scientific a perspective, the more the one point of view is important for its effect. Dutch "perspective boxes" from the time of Vermeer display a scientifically correct peephole that ensures depth illusion; lateral view paintings (such as those exhibited by the Museum of Modern Art in its surrealist show) have also a side attachment through which one may "read" a subject matter that remains undecipherable in frontal approach.

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Mural painting cannot afford the optical protection of a frame; it has to vie in the allotted space with windows, doors, ventilators and pipes; nor is normal vision and single point of view its lot. It caters to a public busy with practical pursuits rather than esthetic ones and catches its eye more often sideways. It cannot count on the pinning of the hypnotized amateur to the horizontal and vertical cross bars of the median lines that is taken for granted in viewing small paintings. The average distance from which a wall will be apprehended depends on the width and length of the room, the place and number of the entrances, the graded levels of floor, staircases and balconies—a complex planned by the architect and over which the painter holds no sway. Mural paintings have to look well both in centered and lateral vision, from a worm's eye view as well as in a plunging perspective. Such a postulate, distinct from the "peephole" assumption of easel painting, makes it impossible to attain any realistic intensity. A certain amount of artificiality, a style, imposes itself on the mural painter as a corollary to the optical postulate. The Egyptian and Chinese mural styles, by ignoring the difficulties of perspective that plagued the Italians, offer a clean-cut solution to the problem of mural optics. But our occidental traditions, intent on defining solids in space, cannot avoid questions of depth. Our mural painter must perforce find a compromise between a standardized perspective based on a single point of view and a mural arrangement that implies multiple points of view.

The armature of so-called "Italian" perspective is such that the horizon line determines the vanishing points and their related fan formations of perspective lines. This key line coincides roughly in easel painting with the horizon line that each spectator generates at his own eye-height; painted and real perspective merge into one, the illusion of depth is enhanced. Most murals start higher than this eye line. If a realistic relationship is to be kept between the painted and the human perspective, the horizon line will sink even lower than the lower edge of the picture, outside the painted area. Mantegna follows this rule in

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his "Triumphs" with results scientifically engrossing, but esthetically freakish. In his "Marriage at Cana" Veronese establishes three horizon lines that may well correspond to the true viewpoint from floor, staircase and balcony levels. But as a rule the mural painter, unable to match the painted horizon line with the stature of a spectator, brings both into an arbitrary relationship that results in a weakening of depth illusion —a happening beneficial to the mural because it preserves the physical identity of the wall surface as a guarantee of its architectural function.

The concept of multiple points of view includes centered vision, that is, the conventional way of looking at a picture, and lateral vision. In a movie house the "style" of the screen picture is very realistic and the subject matter is not chosen for any formal plastic value; so that a man sitting on the side sees the picture on the screen deformed into incredibility. In the theater, however, where the actors have actual bulk, both front and side views are equally convincing. The quandary of the muralist is how to approximate the optical results of the theater with physical means resembling those of the screen. To attempt a solution, let us take three sketches of a model, made simultaneously from center and lateral views, and superimpose them into a composite. The more complex and realistic the subject, the more involved and meaningless the composite. Geometric solids with a square or triangular plan would, however, coincide better than realistic subjects, but not perfectly, and would resemble cubistic variations on dice-shapes; and spheres, cylinders, and cones, offering identical perspectives from the three chosen points of view, yield composites as clear as the objects themselves. To insure the readability of his painting from both center and sides (a necessity not of his own choice), the muralist must reform such shapes as nature offers into compromise volumes closer than are his models to the geometric bodies with circular base that alone solve his problem to perfection.

As the diagonal angle of the view of a wall increases it brings to the drawing itself perspective deformations; side

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vision shortens the horizontals and by contrast emphasizes the verticals; to correct this state of affairs the muralist broadens the horizontals. Giotto is so conscious of this that the bodies he paints are padded, Eskimo fashion, with improbable layers of clothes, their bulk further augmented by thick over-all cloaks, their posture stooped until some personages occupy an area as wide as their height. Such stout shapes retain their apparent mass at much wider angles of vision than would realistic forms. This rule applies in practice to frieze-like murals situated in long and narrow halls, such as the arched walks that line inner patios. The opposite condition obtains when narrow and high panels are protected from side vision by recesses, but are to be seen in close-up from a worm's eye view. The slant tends to shorten the verticals, which results in an apparent broadening of the shape. To correct this illusion the painter must elongate his verticals and narrow his horizontals. The much admired flame-like elongation of El Greco may be rooted not in a mystical urge but in the optical problems peculiar to the narrow and high chapels of Toledo.

While easel painting is pretty much standardized to a rectangular and a vertical area, the grounds for mural painting show an infinite variety of shapes and slopes. The shape matches any portion of inner architecture, may even drop all reference to level and to plum line as it follows the spiral of a staircase. The slope spans all degrees from the vertical walls to the horizontal ceilings. True murals are not confined to the two dimensions of a wall, but spread on architectural units in three dimensions. Their shape may be cubical, on four walls and a ceiling, or partly spherical, on arches or cupolas. The spectator, instead of standing outside of the painting looking in, is surrounded by it like a goldfish by its bowl; each turn of the head, each shift of point of view, brings ever changing modifications to the optical picture, dynamic in the sense that its relative proportions are in a state of liquid mutation. The word coined by Archipenko, "sculpto-painting," fits murals; but instead of covering the convex surface of solid sculpture, murals are laid

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on the concave surfaces of a solid that is but the mold into which a space-sculpture is cast. In the space from wall to wall, from dome to arches, an exchange of optical relationships takes place. The Prophets of the Sistine, facing each other over the width of the nave, engage in a plastic conversation, start a plastic argument that the facing partner concludes, pair complementary rhythms. In the now dismembered room that Ucello criss-crossed with the martial clash of lances, red on black, such a spatial plastic intercourse filled the air with as complicated a *va-et-vient* of optical lines as the bounces of a jai alai ball in a closed court. The dismembered fragments exhibited in museums, the photographs and book illustrations that flatten the mural bulk, miss perforce this vital point, and no more reproduce the actual work than a bear-skin portrays the live animal.

Given the size of walls and the distance from which they are to be viewed, much mural subject matter must be on a heroic scale. The aim of the chosen scale is roughly to suggest normal size from average points of view; to attain this aim the painter must take into consideration the height at which the painted area begins, the set of distances from which it will be seen, and the requirements for visibility under the light conditions that the building affords. Thus, though apparent scale can be accepted as constant, actual scale varies greatly, from the few inches in height of figures in Mayan frescos planned to be seen nose to nose by a squatting onlooker, to the giants that Michelangelo found could barely "carry" from the heights of the Sistine ceiling.

The actual scale is the one that the painter experiences in the course of painting, and its size reacts on the mural style. Physically speaking, the painter who works on a miniature scale will use mainly his fingers; as the scale increases the means shift to the wrist, then to the elbow and in ceiling work even to the shoulder. The tracing patterns natural to each muscular set differ. Broadly speaking, the painter who paints from the shoulder tends to a large and monotonous sweep, less versatile

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than the trick motions at his finger tips. When Renoir lost the use of his fingers that could so daintily knot a ribbon with the brush, a heroic spirit came onto him owing in part to the resulting shift in working muscles from fingers to shoulder, a shift that ordinarily takes place when one changes from easel to murals. Renoir perforce increased in greatness as he came nearer to mural conditions.

The mural problems reviewed so far are not primarily esthetic problems, but concern the physical conditions that govern the making and the seeing of murals. Yet the solution of these physical problems impinges upon esthetics: architectural habitat and multiple points of view call upon the painter to geometrize, impose on his work a style. We come now to problems in drawing, in modeling and color, that are primarily esthetic but likewise so hemmed in by physical actualities, both optical and technical, that their discussion still depends more on objective understanding than subjective considerations. The size of painted walls is such that their subject matter, even enlarged to mural scale, will be more elaborate than in easel painting and the dramatis personae more numerous. There are points of view from which the wall can be seen as a whole, optically reduced by distance to what could be called easel size. In spite of the complex subject matter the muralist must preserve in this total view a certain simplicity, for complexity can be absorbed by the human eye to saturation, but past that point becomes confusion. Simplicity is somewhat automatically preserved by the fact that the smaller elements become invisible at the distance from which the wall may be comprehended as a unit. The handling of the brush that plays a vital role in easel painting lacks carrying range in murals. The witty stroke of Manet, the bold brush of Hals, would be dead matter in mural craft. To the muralist the house painter is the better teacher for he can cover large areas with wise technical impersonality. Having no access to the emotional expression latent in the finger tips of the autographic automatic brush writer, the muralist must find the outlet for his personality mostly in intellectual planning. The viva-

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ciousness that the brush of great easel painters communicates even to bodies in full repose must submit to inorganic architecture. The bloom of a cheek, the warmth of lips, the highlight on an eyeball, lack mural substantiality; at mural range the ovoid of a skull, the cylinder of a neck, express the character of a head long after the features can no longer be seen. With Francesca's women beauty follows mural form and function; they match in their paleness the mixture of marble dust and lime on which they are evoked.

I referred before to a mural composition as a charade where organic bodies and inorganic objects vie in performing architectural roles. This tendency to geometrize becomes much strengthened in practice by the stages that govern the technical handling of true fresco. The painter who dons overalls, climbs a ladder, sits on a plank and paints, elbowed by masons busy with hod and trowel, seems to acquire some of their commonsense manual approach to the craft. To compose, the muralist must read a spirit level, use a plumb line, swing a compass, string a ruled line, slacken a catenary line; to draw, he must stylize a first sketch to mural status, enlarge it on brown paper, retrace it on tracing paper, punch it with pin or roulette, pass it and brush it on the scratch coat, pounce it on the final coat of sand and lime, preparatory to painting. By the time the drawing is transferred to the wall it has exchanged the qualities of spontaneity and impromptu for a dose of impersonal monumentality.

Mural drawing is best paired with a mural palette. Its tradition lives in the books of Cennini and the recipes of contemporary Slav fresco painters. Its sober range owes much to the happy habit that lime has of disintegrating the more blatant pigments, of bringing out the subtleties of earth colors. The resulting nobility suits well the monumental style, unifies in mood and hue the multiple threads of large size composition. Ingres, queried on Dutch genre painting, answered that in spite of its low subject matter its palette was best suited to the noble tone of historical painting. We can add also that this palette is

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eminently mural. The Dutch painters do squeeze out of earth colors all the nuances that are latent in them. The contrast of a brown against a red ochre in Brouwer's "Smokers" is as decisive as the red-green chord that is Delacroix's culminating cymbal-clash; against the warm ochres a pinch of green earth evokes vistas of trees; on the brown glaze of a jug a grey high light suffices to pool the sky. Ingres himself has used the Dutch palette when at his noblest but, a stranger to fresco painting, he could not gather the fullness of his own remark, for this palette of earth colors is *par excellence* a fresco palette.

As is the case with drawing, the technical handling of color has become standardized to maximum efficiency by mural tradition, from the grinding of pigment to a listing of complementaries that contradicts Chevreul's color wheel. The use of *verdaccio* to underpaint flesh, the summing up of modelings into flat stenciled areas, the exalting of the local color by a contrasting net of colored lines, the open cross-hatchings that result automatically in concave or convex illusions, all those recipes are as human, as wise and as healthily limiting as is, to the hordes of potential sounds, the restricted and filtered range of a piano. If such logical handling acquires today an archaistic overtone that is only because ancient tradition is itself a summary of long-pondered function.

Mural drawing and mural color imply mural modeling, and modeling is ruled by light conditions. The steps through which the drawing passes before reaching the wall result in an emphasis on unbroken outline, the traditional application of pigment in unbroken local color. Such elements could not be featured in a sharp diagonal light *à la* Caravaggio or *à la* Rembrandt that replaces the outline with this inner line where dark meets light, that breaks the local color in two portions, contrasted as black to white; nor in the impressionist glare that dissolves outlines behind gauzes of atmospheric haze, splits local color into strips of contrasting hues in its desire to model with color. The mural specification for a clear outline and sustained local color seems to be a frontal, flat, diffused light—a light which

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best holds the object within the bounds of its own outline, plays low the modeling, increases the hegemony of local color, tends to feature things as we know them rather than things as seen. A cloak painted mural style will be truer to the dye in which its model was soaked than to the law of complementaries as observed in nature by Delacroix and Chevreul. For the mural painter dealing with a remote point of view, such a light guarantees maximum breadth, maximum carrying power. Ingres sums it all up in his aphorism, "Reflected lights in the shadows are beneath the dignity of historical painting."

Both easel painter and muralist work perforce at no more than arm's length; but while the easel painter puts to work both brush and eye, the mural painter can be said to paint blind. If he worked easel fashion on the wall, painting daily contrasts in color, value and direction to please his eye, these many small effects would neutralize each other when seen at the long mural range. Especially in fresco where each day's area is thoroughly finished before the neighboring area is begun, the muralist at work is bereft of the physical check-up that a glance at the whole would furnish, must rely on a mental image of planned results. The daily job will look monotonous until, the jigsaw puzzle completed, the parts gather meaning from the whole. Thus a mural fragment similar in subject and area to a given easel picture will show less contrast both in value and color, less variety in line and direction. This fragmentary state is often misinterpreted by critics familiar with easel painting as a weakness of the artist. People who, confronted by the detail of a Rivera fresco, point to a monotony in drawing, a dullness in color and flatness in values, do not point to defects, as they think, but to mural qualities; it is this effacement in each individual score that insures a correct orchestration.

Governed as he is by architecture, the mural painter cannot capture nature as casually or as convincingly as can the easel painter; yet he cannot forego nature as justifiably as the abstractionist. A public building is not a studio where the work of art may be submitted only to the scrutiny of experts; its public

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is made of laymen who expect its painting to tell a story. Thus the mural artist is immobilized between two contradictory magnetic poles: the mysterious architectonic of the mathematical basis of architecture, and the interesting and clear story-telling that his public has a right to expect. The ancient dignity inherent in the calling of the painter of "historyes" is visited anew on the fresco painter. The hierarchical pre-eminence of historical painting that the 17th century took for granted is accepted again. Walls do not encourage the factual listing of casual objects proper to still life, nor the petty anecdotes of genre painters; their sheer size and their public function fit them better to the doings of heroic characters, to the weaving of themes weighted with human significance.

Propaganda and fresco mix well. In a former day the mother of Villon relished in the murals of her parish church the display of the Blessed in heaven that stirred her to virtue, the vision of lost souls boiled in vast caldrons that kept her away from sin. The "Battles" that Le Brun painted for Louis XIV, the mural canvases that David covered for Napoleon, hallowed as they are, were in their time raw political propaganda. A friend relates an overheard conversation showing that this affinity is still understood, though perhaps stated in muddled form.

"X is to paint a fresco for the government."

"He wouldn't dare!"

"But why not?"

"Because a fresco is a Communist painting."

Public speaking in paint, painting from the pulpit or the soapbox, requires technical achievements distinct from those of "chamber" painting. For even if we admit that mural painting must have a religious or a social content, whatever the axe that the painter grinds it is his job to grind it fine. Thus we come back to plastic problems concerning line, mass, value and color, problems that public and patrons alike impatiently dismiss as studio shop talk. But in final analysis it is on these that the clear enunciation of the theme, and hence its propagandistic power, hinges.

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George Lyman Kittredge

February 28, 1860-July 23, 1941

JOHN LIVINGSTON LOWES

I HAVE been asked by THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR to write "something about Mr. Kittredge." But in order to make clear what he meant to one of his students, who was later one of his colleagues and friends, I must begin with a word of autobiography. For what I shall say of myself will be true, as I know—and that is the sole reason for saying it—and it will apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to scores of others.

When I came to Harvard as a graduate student thirty-nine years ago, I had taught in two other colleges for ten years, and had done post-graduate work in another and different field in both this country and Germany. I had had, during those years, one supremely great teacher out of a score—a personality as vivid and racy as George Lyman Kittredge himself. And I scarcely hoped to find another. Then, having seen at long last that English was what I wanted to teach, I came to the Graduate School at Harvard. At the end of the first half year I had made up my mind that so far as English was concerned I should go elsewhere. Then, by the mercy of Heaven to me, at the beginning of the second half year, I went into Mr. Kittredge's course in *Beowulf*. And before the first hour was over, I knew that I should stay till the cows came home. ("I like *colloq*," said Mr. Kittredge once, "and often use it"—as he *did*, like a master!) I was not unlike the youngster who once said profoundly of G. L. K.: "I'm studying *Beowulf* with Beowulf himself." At all events that one hour of *Beowulf* in the year of our Lord, 1903, determined for me the next thirty-eight years.

For the next fourteen of those years I was away from Harvard. And then began a new relationship with Mr. Kittredge.

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For during those fourteen years I had come to feel (as many others, I know, have felt) the merging in Mr. Kittredge of the teacher with the friend. I wish I knew how many of the familiar blue envelopes came to me during the years before my return to Harvard—letters, often, in prompt answer to mine, but still oftener slips of paper with note of some item, some detail, which he knew would fit in with what at the moment I was working on. And when (as once more many of us knew) we who were his old pupils had decisions to make which to us were important, no wise elder brother could have been more ready with advice and counsel.

In the undergraduate world Mr. Kittredge was one of the figures about whom legends grew, and tales, even as in his once beloved folklore. He was arrogant, he was impatient of dullness and stupidity, he had a temper that could flare, and a tongue that could lash, and—when real need of any sort arose among his youngsters—he was the very soul of kindness and help. Shakespeare and Chaucer mean to thousands today something which they could never have meant without his great courses which dealt with them. His books constitute one of his monuments but his supreme monument is the recollection, in thousands of minds, of those courses, and of a vivid and dynamic—and sometimes redoubtable—figure on the platform.

But that was one side only. His interest in the work of his onetime pupils never flagged. A single instance out of a hundred must suffice. One of the most bizarre details in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is that of the stiff and flaming arms of the reanimated dead. I happened to mention it to Mr. Kittredge when I was at work on *The Road to Xanadu*. At once he suggested that fantastic superstition of the "Hand of Glory"—a hint which sent me into one of the most fascinating explorations I remember. And that was but one instance out of scores. If one should gather, from the notes in the innumerable books and articles which his onetime pupils have written, only the *subjects* of their acknowledgment to him, a list of those subjects would constitute in itself an almost incredible volume.

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Mr. Kittredge, happily, wrote much, and his expository prose is a mirror of its writer—lucid, logical, and exact, bare for the most part of adventitious ornament, and in scrupulous keeping with the clarity of his exposition and the logic of his argument. If ever the stock phrase that the style is of the man had incontestable pertinence, it had it for him. And the vividness and raciness which on occasion marked his classroom lectures not infrequently flash from the printed page. "Chaucer," wrote Mr. Kittredge, "had such stupendous luck in meeting nonpareils!"—a sentence which sums up in eight words what the delightful line which follows it elaborates—a line ending with the "rascally alchemist was perspiring so admirably that Chaucer gazed on him with rapture. 'It was joye for to seen him swete,' cried the poet in high delight." And Mr. Kittredge was delighted too.

This is no place for bibliography, nor would there be space for it. But I have before me as I write a list which I recently made of Mr. Kittredge's uncollected articles in the various learned journals. Its completeness I should be unwilling to assume. But it contains as it stands sixty-one articles, beginning (to follow the alphabet) with "Armpitting among the Greeks," and ending with "Witchcraft in old and New England." Those two titles, in their accidental juxtaposition, stand for two of Mr. Kittredge's dearest scholarly interests—the folklore which he knew as few others have known it, and his own beloved native soil. The closing lines of his *Chaucer and His Poetry* have the ring of a *confessio fidis*: "For nobody but Geoffrey Chaucer divined the tragic face behind the satyr's mask,—Geoffrey Chaucer, poet, idealist, burgher of London, Commissioner of Dykes and Ditches, who loved his fellow men both good and bad, and found no answer to the puzzle of life but in truth and courage and beauty and belief in God."

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Toward a Philosophy of Art as Creation

MILTON K. MUNITZ

OPENING sentences of great books frequently have a revealing and determining importance that makes them worthy of the most careful attention. There is perhaps no better known sentence in all literature or one that has had a greater influence upon the thought of mankind than that which opens the Book of Genesis. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In these few, simple words is foreshadowed a whole theory of the world and, by implication, man's destiny in it. Suppose now that the Bible had instead as its first sentence the following: "The end of man is to create a heaven on earth." Can a more radical change in orientation and philosophic outlook be imagined? Instead of a theory of cosmic creation we would be introduced to a theory of human art; instead of looking to God's purposes we would concern ourselves with man's ideals; instead of peering backwards to an absolute beginning in the past we would direct our vision to the infinite possibilities of the future; instead of assertions about the origin of the world as a whole we would turn to the ideal goods of human experience.

For some, no doubt, such a change would constitute a blasphemous corruption of a sacred text. Others, perhaps, might see in it a possible translation of language basically poetic and symbolic into its equivalent moral meaning. Whether the change, however, from the one mode of expression to the other is blasphemy or wisdom need not be argued at this point. I would simply invite the reader to consider the actual motives and possible consequences of making such a translation or substitution. A theory of creation in some form or other plays a controlling

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role in every philosophic system. It is in terms of such a theory that we come at once, so to speak, to first and last things. In terms of it we may understand how radical chaos is turned into rational order. What then is involved in passing from a theory of divine creation to one of human art? What can prompt such a change and what are the possible values, philosophically considered, that might ensue if we were to adopt it? An answer to this question will reveal the manner in which the essential moral wisdom of supernaturalism, corrupted through a magical view of nature, may be effectively reinterpreted in the setting of a world that science has increasingly taught us to understand.

The dominant religious tradition in our Western culture, that of supernaturalism, offers a set of answers to the most fundamental questions that every sensitive and perplexed mind eventually raises. For such a mind is aroused by the mystery of existence as a whole and seeks for some meaning or purpose in human life in particular. The existence of the world and all it contains is explained as the product of an original act of creation by an omniscient, omnipotent and benevolent Creator. And a meaningful pattern for human conduct is supplied in terms of a moral code with its system of rewards and punishments, a doctrine of immortality, and a philosophy of history. The history of the world and man in it constitutes a vast drama whose plot is pervasively rational. It is a drama that opens with the miracle of divine creation and that passes through long and innumerable stages from the Fall of Man to his redemption and ultimate salvation.

The underlying assumption of this whole scheme of interpretation, all special emphases and variant details aside, is that there exists a predetermined complete rationality governing the occurrence of cosmic and human events. It is a rationality that flows from the transcendent purposes of the Deity and that is partly disclosed to man through revelation, faith and authority. If we were asked then to summarize in a word the sort of explanation of things which traditional religion offers, we might answer: an explanation in terms of purpose. All things created

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have their final causes or ends. They are such as God has assigned to them, and if we can discover what these are, and what role they play in the entire system or hierarchy of purposes, we should then be intellectually satisfied and morally enlightened. Ultimately God's purposes not only explain or justify the behavior of things, but are also the effective instruments for bringing them into existence. The ends to which things move are the original causes for their creation.

It is a commonplace that the accelerated and widespread development of science in modern civilization marks one of its greatest revolutionary achievements. It has determined the character of our beliefs and transformed the materials of our environment. The changes it has effected are typified in the Copernican and Industrial Revolutions. The course of modern history may thus be written in terms of the various ways in which man has sought to digest the intellectual implications and employ the practical fruits of its results. It was science that eventually shattered the tightly-knit world of medieval supernaturalism and that offered the means for building a new scheme for understanding the world. It is true, of course, that the early development of science did not at once replace supernaturalism. Many astronomers and physicists, indeed, simply set themselves to discover the laws of motion of the world that God had created, the better to understand His handiwork. Kepler and Newton were pious men who regarded their scientific apparatus as a means, extraordinarily successful, for reading the mathematical language in which the Book of Nature had been composed. In accomplishing this result, however, it was necessary to abandon speculation upon the hidden or transcendental purposes of things and concentrate upon the discoverable, actual mechanisms of their operation. The question "Why?" receded into the background to be replaced by the question "How?" Explanation in terms of purpose yielded to explanation in terms of mechanical causes. Questions about the natural orders of composition, generation, and motion supplanted a dramatic or moral interest in the ultimate issue of things. As science devel-

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oped, equipped with a self-conscious method of inquiry, it increasingly met with success in this enterprise of discovering the natural order of events. And if there is still an indefinite realm of the unknown, we may confidently expect that the persistent application and extension of the same scientific method will bring it bit by bit within the grasp of our understanding.

The development of science has not only contributed to our understanding of Nature. It has awakened an explicit awareness of the reasons for that success. It lies in the method used. Neither blind faith nor dogmatic authority nor appeals to super-empirical revelations and mystical sources of information can, in the end, give us the truth. For wherever such methods are employed no universal agreement is to be found, and no progress in understanding or correction of beliefs is possible. The method of science, on the other hand, is essentially an appeal to the tested and controlled experience of a public community of investigators. Its results are always tentative, corrigible, and subject to the demands of identifiable evidence. Its own fruits in the deepening of our understanding and the widening of our control of nature's mechanisms is thus the best possible evidence of the soundness of its method.

A restriction to the use of scientific method as the source of our beliefs has, however, this consequence. Science demands a naturalistic world view. Nature is the sole ultimate reality of which we can obtain secure and publicly verifiable knowledge. All significant problems have reference to some area or level of the world in which we live, move and have our being. The mystery of existence reduces to a multiple series of problems concerning some aspect of Nature itself. We cannot meaningfully presume to go beyond Nature in any way and seek for some further reality with which it is connected. For all connections of causation, purpose or derivation are meaningful only insofar as they are applicable to entities or processes *within* Nature. The attempt to apply such concepts to Nature as a whole with respect to some transcendent or supernatural being must forever be incapable of scientific sanction.

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It has long since been shown by Kant and others that any attempt by the use of reason to determine whether, for example, the world as a whole had an absolute beginning, whether there is a First Cause for the entire process of natural change, is an attempt that is foredoomed to failure. Unless we are willing (as a scientific intelligence would not be) to fall back on blind faith and ultimately unverifiable metaphysics, we must remain within the confines of our ordinary experience and intelligence in understanding the world in which we live. When science sets itself to this task it discovers, when it is successful, that however deeply or widely it probes the interstices of existence it always comes upon some specific system of events, some intelligible sequence or order of changes. It discovers transformations of energy or matter, but no absolute creation of matter or energy themselves. The axiom that Lucretius used as a cornerstone of his system of thought has remained ever since as basic for all naturalistic science and philosophy. Nothing is ever begotten of nothing.

The foregoing remarks, whatever the familiar ground they traverse, remind us of the essential background against which a doctrine of creation must be developed. Such a doctrine would have the task of doing justice at once to our best available understanding of the facts and to the claims of our highest moral aspirations. It is here that a naturalistic philosophy meets its crucial test. The criticism indeed most frequently leveled against such a philosophy has been its failure to accommodate or give significance to that whole range of spiritual values which, on other premises, lent rational justification and worth to human experience. If the world as disclosed by science is a vast and alien system of blindly operating forces then man and all he prizes, it is claimed, are but fortuitous, insignificant accidents in a pervasively purposeless process. When we turn to science as the basis for our view of the world and man's place in it we are simply given a cold shower bath of facts. Purposes and values go unheeded in the scramble to discover the causes of things. The religious explanation in terms of purposes was at

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least superior in this respect to scientific explanation. It appears, therefore, that each approach has the values that the other lacks. For while religion gave us a sense of direction and ultimate goals it nevertheless was founded on a mythologic view of the facts. Science, on the other hand, while correcting the latter deficiency, leaves us helpless and confused with respect to the possible goods to be attained in the sort of world it discloses. How then can we achieve that integration in which the conditions and values of our experience will be given their respective and equal due? In what direction shall we turn if we would combine religious wisdom and scientific sobriety?

Reflection upon the meaning of experience as art suggests an answer at once simple, ancient and profound. It provides the integration we are seeking. Creation illustrated here is something we can identify and appreciate. It sums up the element of divinity in life that redeems it from being merely brutish and short. For man's essential ideal may be said to consist of the exercise of intelligence in the transformation of the given raw materials of experience to create of them self-rewarding ideal ends. The goods of life are the piecemeal and varied achievements of creative intelligence. The term "art" in a broad and comprehensive sense designates the method and results of this significant enterprise. It covers the entire range and includes all the varied provinces of rational living. If science tells us what the world is, art points the way to what man can achieve.

An emphasis upon experience as art moreover exhibits the shortcomings of an exclusive reliance upon either traditional religion or a narrow pursuit of science as means for securing ultimate values. For art involves making the world a different place to live in. Religion, on the contrary, too often consists of the futile attempt to escape by imaginative means alone to another world in which the deficiencies of this one are replaced by their ideal opposites. The difference is enormous and genuine. The one invites creative effort to transform the blind spots and crudities of existence into genuinely ideal objects. The other marks a desperate conviction or illusory hope that there already

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exists a heaven of realized ideals in which we might participate after death, or perhaps even through some mystical flight now. Disillusionment with the promise of a satisfactory natural life and the emasculated negation of the springs of that life bring with them dreams of otherworldly bliss. The soul, lingering within the pale shadows of the cloister, resigns itself to its earthly charnel house and refuses to confront the world to win from it the substance of a variegated happiness. Religion comes to foster the illusory belief in the supernatural existence of ideals and thereby dampens the creative effort necessary for their genuine and effective embodiment.

Nor can an exclusive devotion to the interests of pure science fare much better. For the parsimonious dedication to the truth and nothing but the truth betrays the pride of intellect that is due for a fall. Personal and social chaos will ultimately envelop it. Lucifer was condemned to Hell for his refusal to admit the moral sovereignty of the good. A deliberate insistence upon absolute disinterestedness and a proud, positivistic unconcern with values are admirable virtues in the laboratory. They are insufficient for a complete life in the world. If we were pure intellects, as Aristotle portrayed God to be, our happiness would be exhausted in the quiet contemplation of the ordered world before us. But we are animals at bottom and only at best intellects. What to the scientist is merely an instance of mechanical or natural order may from the point of view of our animal or social interests be the most abysmal chaos. Nature in her inexhaustible fertility and blind garrulity brings all things to light, the most delightful as well as the most hideous. And she must be forgiven for she knows not what she does. It is however when man, or nature herself in one of her products now raised to consciousness, arrives on the scene that ordered facts become problematic values. Existence becomes colored in the light of his selective preferences.

The interest in truth, such as science glorifies, represents the piety of man in understanding the laws of his homeland and birthplace. It is the respect which he pays to the forces which

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begot him. In learning the nature of these forces he cultivates a primary and homely virtue. Through the eyes of science we see Nature from her own point of view, so to speak, and not in terms of our moral perspectives. Where the madman or invalid experiences defeat and suffers in disease, the physician discerns an understandable sequence of causes and effects. Where millions lead stunted lives or are hurled to their death in bloody wars, the historian notes the predictable outcome of patterns of social conduct. Yet these experiences of men on an animal or social level, as seen from the inside, have a color and a force that cannot be obliterated or replaced by attention solely to the truth about them. They make demands upon the world and pass judgments on it. They condemn it for its evils or welcome it for its goods. To be concerned with the good, therefore, with the rational order that might supervene upon moral chaos, poses an inevitable interest that a narrow and exclusive devotion to the truth can never wholly replace. It is an interest to which intelligence as the guide of our practice must dedicate itself. It is a problem of art, of the use to be made of the best available knowledge of human actions in the interest of making of them ideal goods. Such in essence is the physician's art and such, ideally, is the statesman's. The same persistence and painstaking exercise of critical intelligence in the *creation* of a satisfactory order in our lives is demanded as has been lavished by the empirical sciences in their *discovery* of order in Nature at large.

Meanwhile there is one domain of human experience that abundantly illustrates within its restricted sphere the general program of a rational ethics and that serves to inspire its outlook: the realm of the fine arts. For, to put it simply, we may say that the fine arts exhibit on a miniature level the principles that underlie and pervade the ideals of a total, comprehensive rational life. We must go to the fine arts to discover the illustrations of a creativeness that marks the distinctive essence of human activity. The ideal creations to be found there are tokens of what life as a whole, on the level of integrated personal and social behavior, would be like if intelligence were to become our

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guide and instrument. Works of art are fragments of creative effort where intelligence and imagination have been successful.

A Beethoven quartet marks an ideal clearing in the jungle of the world's noise. The spectacle presented by a Cézanne canvas invites a significant pause amid the welter of our hurried, shifting and routine visual reactions. Shakespeare, starting with the world no man made, created many worlds within it. Without "the world" the plays could not have been written, but once written they form as it were lucid precipitates of a more or less chaotic flux. A significant work of art, in short, is a miniature cosmos in which chaos and confusion, drabness and triviality, have been replaced by clarity, order and luminous significance. Living in it, absorbed and arrested by it, we undergo a heightening, deepening and enrichment of experience for which no further justification is needed, since all justification itself must be given ultimately in terms of experiences such as these. Fine art is final. It consummates in ideal form the means and the material involved in its creation. Nodes of realized form that serve to elicit the esthetic experience are thus ends in a temporal and moral sense. They culminate and bring to intrinsic fruition processes otherwise endless and futile. It is in such artistic creation that man carries forward and brings to ideal completion the processes of nature as they enter into his experience. Nature's fertility and inexhaustible richness become concentrated and clarified in the redirective and selective creations of his intelligence. It is in art, we may say, that man becomes a God, for he creates a world out of chaos, a world that incarnates and shines forth meanings that his intelligence can probe and master.

These considerations enable us at once to reject as misguided any escapist approach to the arts and esthetic experience. For that approach betrays and feeds upon an underlying disillusionment with life. Art becomes for it a last glimmering oasis in a desert of inevitable frustration and madness where brief snatches of meaning can be intermittently grasped. Esthetic experience becomes a palliative and anodyne, a pleasant inter-

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lude of dreaming, a respite from toil and boredom. Such indulgence of the fancy, however, such release from preoccupation with the irrationality of the rest of our experience, makes of art not a genuine achievement of life, but rather a sugar-coated substitution for it. For art when it is healthy is the fruit of creative effort. On the side of enjoyment, just as on the side of creation, it is not mere passive contemplation but the controlled, critical perception of the art-object that prepares the ground for genuine appreciation. Esthetic recreation is itself the fruit of intelligent effort.

A condemnation of the rest of our experience other than those moments of esthetic satisfaction as meaningless must, accordingly, not be taken as an absolute and irrevocable judgment of its quality. Rather it emphasizes all the more vividly, by way of contrast, the necessity of making what is already true of the arts also true of it. By making of the irrationally given materials of our lives the substance of an organically integrated work of art, we would attain the sort of satisfaction and meaningfulness that is now so abundantly available in the fine arts. In a society rationally controlled to supply ample opportunity for the growth and welfare of its members, in intellectual problems adequately solved through controlled inquiries, in the warmth of deeply rooted loves and friendships, in senses attuned to the esthetic delights of its environment, in all of these we can find an answer at once richly satisfying and preciously rewarding for all our perplexities and labor. They mark the achievements of reason and the substance of art. Creation is man's prerogative and the instrument for realizing divinity. It is the means for turning the flux of experience into meaning, for realizing truth, beauty and goodness where otherwise there would be nothing but atoms and the void, esthetic dullness and moral chaos.

It is no accident that the concept of creation should play a dominant role in the speculations of theology and the philosophic analysis of art. Both are concerned with something of ultimate importance. Yet all the essential values enshrined in

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the mythical vision of the theologian may be effectively conserved and given genuine status in the naturalist's appraisal of the function of art. The important difference is one of orientation and perspective. Instead of looking backwards to an original, total creation of the cosmos, we look forward to the infinite possibilities of man's own specific, deliberate and many-centered acts of creation. Instead of falling back on dogmatic authority or blind faith to inform us of the predetermined purposes of a supernatural intelligence, we turn rather to our own critical intelligence, operating with the needs and impulses of our naturally endowed organs as the instrument for achieving our ideal goals.

Precisely however because such needs and impulses are varied and differently constituted for individuals and cultures alike, no absolute or single scheme can be formulated to dictate the specific content or form that a given life must assume. Each individual and each age must work out its own salvation. The ideal will in every case be reached when intelligence has secured mastery of the conditions of that life and has managed to turn its materials to some spiritually satisfying account. Then criticism, as did God, will be able to examine the fruit of creative labor, to judge and appreciate its worth. The sabbath day of rest and spiritual contemplation, always freshly justified and incessantly striven for, will be an omnipresent token of the peace and happiness that is man's only goal and genuine destiny.

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History Directs the Movies

KURT PINTHUS

MR. WILL H. HAYS says in his booklet *See and Hear*, "The motion picture is the epitome of civilization and the quintessence of what we mean by 'America.'"

What is the character of this "epitome of civilization" in the most critical moment of history and what does this country look like in that "quintessence of what we mean by 'America'"? Shakespeare demanded that the theater be "the abstract and the brief chronicle of the time." Has the motion picture taken over the heritage of the theater now that the stage, especially since the disappearance of the Federal Theater, can no longer fulfill this function—because neither its dramatic nor its economic means can keep pace with the gigantic events of our time? What financial and artistic effect has the Second World War, the "total revolution" of Europe, perhaps of the whole world, exercised on the motion picture? And how can its negative factors be counterbalanced? Are the social, economic and political problems of our time touched on in the motion picture and what is its attitude toward them? How does the screen portray the war and the opposing currents that brought it on? What is the motion picture's reaction to the defense program of this country? And what is it doing to make America more familiar with its democratic heritage and to heighten the popular support of those ideas that have dominated this country?

This is the general problem of the motion picture: a technical invention has rapidly developed into an enormous industry, an industry that endeavors to be an art—which must be an art for the masses. In the period from 1919 to 1939 a certain balance was held between business and art in the motion picture. Now, however, the film industry both in this country and in the na-

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tions at war has been shaken to its foundations; its economic structure and the content of its pictures have been affected alike.

For a moment let me be Robert Ripley. Believe it or not: the average weekly attendance at motion picture theaters throughout this country is 85,000,000. The average admission price is only 23 cents; nevertheless in 1939 Americans spent one billion dollars on movie-going. The world's capital investment in the film industry amounts to about three billion dollars of which two billion are invested in the United States: $1,880,000,000 in the theaters, $100,000,000 in the studios and $20,000,000 in distribution. The actual production cost of the 500 features and 700 shorts made in the United States every year is approximately $165,000,000.

Despite these imposing figures the film industry of this country is supposed to be in financial peril. Up to the outbreak of the war 65 per cent of the world's screen consumption was met by American pictures; 35 to 40 per cent of Hollywood's annual total gross income was derived from foreign countries. The United States produced only 40 per cent of the films of the world by volume but their value was 75 per cent of the world's production. In France 45 per cent of the films shown were made in the United States, in Belgium 60 per cent, in Great Britain 81 per cent. Even in Nazi Germany, which does not approve of American pictures, 52 American films were shown in 1937 as compared with 96 pictures of German origin. Today the foreign market, comprising about 48,000 movie theaters (in Europe alone 36,000) is almost entirely lost. Only Latin America's 5,400 houses continue to take their normal volume. The situation is further complicated by the exacting restrictions governing financial exchange in practically every country of the world. And yet William Dieterle, himself a producer and the director of the best of the biographical pictures, says, "Even if the entire foreign market is eventually wiped out, I insist that Hollywood can maintain its functioning, and functioning with profit." For in 1938 its net profit from the public in the United States was $21,500,000.

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This sounds encouraging. Yet while ten years ago this country's average weekly movie attendance was 110 million, today it is 80 to 85 million and seems likely to decrease further, although the population has in the meantime increased by about 10 million. These facts, together with the loss in the foreign market, give grounds for the pessimism reflected by another expert, J. P. McEvoy, who writes, "Can the industry go on paying huge salaries and bonuses with the domestic market going and the foreign market gone? It cannot."

The American film industry has tried to increase its earnings by charging higher admission fees for the most elaborate pictures. Because of this *Gone With the Wind*, in itself a great success, registered a total gross of $20,000,000 for its world showing—an unprecedented high in the history of the film box office and twice the figure for *Snow White* which had up to that time held the record. But such price increases can be made only occasionally, because of the economic level of the mass of movie-goers.

Films can be produced only if the masses go to the movies, and the greater part of the industry claims the masses demand from the film not art, not education, but simply entertainment; others advise, to increase film attendance, the creation of better, more controversial, more experimental pictures. A recently related story would seem to bear out the former contention: about two years ago a Hollywood firm planned in conjunction with the C.I.O. to present, against the background of an entertaining story, the growth of the worker from the status of a wage slave to that of a free individual and union member; but after a great deal of inquiry John L. Lewis was told something like this, "The wives of our members want to see Shirley Temple. When they want to hear about labor questions they go to meetings." Consequently the picture was not made. And yet such artistically and educationally important pictures as *The Informer* or *The Life of Zola* offer also relaxation and entertainment.

Where lies the real explanation for the low level of the present picture production as a whole? About 1920 the major

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film companies were so flooded with capital that they strove to own as many theaters as possible. Now the major companies control almost one quarter of the seats in the United States, including the key houses, the largest and most beautiful theaters in 73 out of the 92 cities with over 100,000 population. The companies, of course, exhibited their pictures in their own theaters first. The independent exhibitors, thus at a disadvantage, were furthermore forced to accept with every successful picture a great number of others—sometimes even a company's entire production sight unseen. This system of chain theaters and block-booking guaranteed the sale of each film to as many theaters as possible; a few good pictures carried with themselves a few dozen poor ones. Therefore, as they say in Hollywood, the motion picture is the only industry which is able to pay off like a racket; but on the other hand the film industry had robbed itself of the incentive to produce good pictures.

Partly to meet the competition of neighboring theaters, but more as a means of showing the mass of compulsorily-booked films, the double-feature system was introduced about 1930. In turn the double-feature system obliged the industry to produce about twice as many pictures as it was equipped to handle. Consequently, and quite consciously, the industry made many of them quickly, cheaply and badly and branded them B pictures. Finally, in 1938, the Neely-Pettingill Bill, proscribing compulsory block-booking and blind selling, was drawn up. Before a definite law was passed, but in the face of the threat of action against the eight major studios under the anti-trust law, a consent decree was issued which went into effect September 1, 1941. This limits the number of films in a block to five, and grants the exhibitor the right to see all films and make his own selection from among them.

In addition to the double feature many programs include news reels, cartoons, announcements, even vaudeville and Bingo or Screeno. Such a performance, lasting about four hours, damages health and mind. In Germany, where the two-feature system was abolished years ago, the average program consists of

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the feature, news reels, and an educational film or a cartoon, and lasts one and a half or at most two hours. The movie-goer does not return home completely exhausted and can, moreover, listen to the radio beforehand or afterwards (an important consideration, for surveys have indicated that the radio has been an eminent factor in the decrease in movie attendance; when the President made his highly political fireside chat soon after his reelection, movie attendance dropped 50 per cent).

It seems high time to discard the double bill—to which, a Gallup poll shows, more than two thirds of the movie audience 25 and older is opposed. Texas is the first state where double features are not permitted and the exhibitors there "are doing less crying of the blues than those states where double features are supposed to boost business." In Illinois the women's organizations complained so intensely about four-hour programs that a bill outlawing the showing of double features has now passed the Illinois house by a vote of 81 to 49. The independent theater owners of the New York City area voted to abolish double features in a classic document excellently combining the pertinent points: "the theater owners' group holds that programming two top feature pictures on one bill is using up product faster than Hollywood can replenish it; that showing a good picture and a bad picture together harms the good picture, and that showing two bad pictures at one time is just bad showmanship. If good pictures were shown singly they would last twice as long, the bad pictures would not be shown in such wide proportion and the picture markets would be able to concentrate on fewer—and better—stories."

Most critics agree that in both content and expression the majority of films are made for juveniles. This blame rests partly on mass production of films, partly on the producer who for alleged reasons of business interferes with the director. The directors, moreover, are working in the shadow of the Hays office; in addition they fear to stir up the prejudices of audiences or of the censors in those eight states which have introduced censorship; and they dread a boycott from the countless

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organizations in a position to lay one down. A dream plot to satisfy everybody should present a hero who, as a youth, fought in the Civil War for the Confederates but loved a Yankee girl, who later on fought for the United States in the Spanish-American War and finally married a wealthy widow from the West.

I am not however so pessimistic about Hollywood as many of my critical friends, for if of the two features of most programs the bad ones were forgotten a good number of valuable and experimental pictures would remain. And the impartial observer of international film production will stress one point: despite the mentioned handicaps and the aversion of the big companies to controversial subjects, more pictures in this country than anywhere else have dealt analytically and aggressively with current problems, sometimes with a realism denied Eric von Stroheim one and a half decades ago.

It was believed in the early days of the motion picture that the screen with its miraculous effects would prove a medium uniquely suited to the realm of the bizarre and fantastic. But after a few initial successes about 1920, such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Destiny* and *Waxworks*, phantasmagoria degenerated into horror pictures (*Dracula* and *Frankenstein*), and the men who directed these early ventures turned more and more to realism. Ernst Lubitsch, an imaginative director, once told me he had made no fantastic pictures because fantasy, even if handled with the greatest skill, appears in sharp focus, in palpable shape on the screen, and becomes therefore too realistic. Maeterlinck's ingenious *The Blue Bird* was a failure as a film because it was enacted with real people in real sets.

In the animated cartoon, however, Walt Disney has realized a cherished dream of the great theater reformer and originator of the New Movement on the stage, Edward Gordon Craig, who claims that the actor, working within the limits imposed on him by his body and his own changing moods, cannot escape from them to give a perfect portrayal of the characters, and that consequently the ideal actor is the *Über-Marionette* which

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can be formed in the exact image created by the poet's imagination. Disney's animal and human figures are such super-puppets in constant movement. In Disney's cartoons all animals, flowers, objects and people are direct realizations of imagination; and since they are independent of the conditions and limitations of reality, can carry the emotional content of moods more poignantly than even great actors. Mr. Disney's recent experiment, *Fantasia*, is a remarkable attempt to realize one of the hopes of Romanticism—the simultaneous enjoyment of two arts.

How does the realistic American film of today express changing social standards? The Cinderella and Pollyanna types, the misunderstood, innocent, somewhat silly girls whose poverty, sweetness and kindness charm all the good people and reform the bad, are no longer popular. Bette Davis, who presents by no means a pretty type and plays, as she herself says, "gutty girls and attractive wenches," led all other women stars as a box office attraction in 1940. And the handsome but insipid lover is almost as obsolete as the beautiful, tender heroine; today he is replaced by tough guys like James Cagney and Edward G. Robinson or obviously intelligent men like Melvyn Douglas, Cary Grant and Spencer Tracy.

Increasingly love and marriage are presented less sentimentally, more and more in a social and economic setting normal to the 20th century. Now, e.g. in *Saturday's Children* or *We Who Are Young*, the couple is engrossed in its mutual social obligations in the economic fight. Sarcastic farce comedy of love, marriage and divorce, employing many of the devices of the old slapstick combined with the new sophisticated dialogue and the new hardboiled characterizations of both sexes, is growing more and more popular since such masterpieces as *It Happened One Night* and *The Awful Truth*. Recent numerous productions in this genre have included such charming and artistic nonsense as *The Lady Eve* and *Tom, Dick and Harry* and the sharper *Philadelphia Story*—which in my opinion is, in its satiric handling of a wider segment of the luxurious Main Line background, better than the original play.

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The silent picture had, in the middle of the twenties, attained a relentless realism of high artistic value: in Germany in the so-called *Kammerspielfilmen*; in America in von Stroheim's splendid social attempts (unfortunately bungled in their production), in gangster pictures (*Underworld*, 1927) and above all in King Vidor's somber study, *The Crowd* (1928), the first picture to approach seriously the joyless, frustrated life of the everyday man. However, after the sound picture had arrived, the operatic melodrama of Al Jolson and the musical comedy pushed realism into a corner at first. These new pictures, retracing the course taken by the silent film during its two decades of life, reverted to sentimentality and superficial embellishments. After the crash of 1929 the movies became a form of escape; audiences enjoyed in them a world in which they heard nothing of the financial crisis or of threatening fascism; in America *Let Us Be Gay* and *Broadway Melody* were typical titles, in Germany *Zwei Herzen im Dreivierteltakt.*

But on the other hand after the crash the public had to deal with the economic and social problems of the early thirties. Characteristically it was the sound gangster pictures, returning to the realism of the silent gangster film, which first reached a high level of excellence and significance. *Little Caesar* (1930) became the model for the fearless and feelingless tough guy—who was no longer, however, the powerful giant of the underworld pictures of the twenties, but a mentally superior, strong-nerved leader. The gangster movie marked the beginning not only of realism in sound, but also of moviedom's interest in social and educational problems. The introduction to *Scarface* (1932), starring Paul Muni, stated that it was "an indictment against . . . the careless indifference of the Government." Soon films were giving an analysis of and a protest against the economic and political weaknesses in which gangsterism could grow exuberantly. They went further; from *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* and *Girls on Probation* up to this moment a great many of them have raised the problem of the correction of criminals, the cruelty of treatment to which they are often

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subjected and the frequently insuperable bars set against their readmission to society.

After 1932 Hollywood also began relentlessly and more broadly to expose—in a long series of films including *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, *Washington Masquerade*, *The Dark Horse*, *The President Vanishes*, and, more recently, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *The Great McGinty* and *Meet John Doe*—the corrupt alliance between politics and gangsterism, political and financial interests; the sharpness of some of these films would be possible only in this country. Two of the most radical pictures were La Cava's *Gabriel Over the White House* wherein the President awakens as a dictator, and Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* depicting with unusual means of action, expression and technique the endeavours of a powerful and ambitious character to dominate his fellow men.

The movie was slower to deal with timely proletarian themes than the novel. But when its audiences became concerned with problems of labor, unemployment and poverty, Hollywood followed the new popular interest. The major companies touched the labor problem most hesitantly and in most cases took the side of the employer, portraying him (*The Power and The Glory*, *The Toast of New York*) as a particularly industrious and honest man laboring for the welfare of the community. Concurrently *Red Dust*, *I Believe in You* and similar films depicted organized workers as ignorant men or criminals; in *Black Fury* strikes were fomented by gangsters. Yet though labor as a class was coolly treated by Hollywood, the individual worker usually appeared in the role of an upright, hardworking, good-natured fellow, not to be deflected from his duty. Some independent producers made such confessedly propagandistic pictures as *Taxi*, *Millions of Us*, *The Wave*, in an effort to explain the meaning of unions and strikes. The most profound of the studies of the proletarian world, Chaplin's *Modern Times*, is also the merriest; it is the story of a simple individual crushed between the machinery of a factory and the equally complicated machinery of the contemporary social scene.

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With King Vidor's *Our Daily Bread*, 1934 (so outspoken this director was forced to make it at his own expense) the unemployment theme was broached to the film world. It was continued in two of the best films of the past few years—*My Man Godfrey* and *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*—although in each the problem is solved through the philanthropy of rich people. Of course even the best pictures of the best directors favor friendly—too friendly—solutions of social questions and, particularly during the last months, have had a conciliatory undertone. In *Kitty Foyle* the girl's fate is almost entirely the result of a frustrated love affair rather than of the economic and social conditions emphasized in the original book; in *Meet John Doe* average man, preaching "love your neighbor," fights crooked politician; in *The Devil and Miss Jones* hardboiled tycoon is converted to sympathy for labor through working as a salesman in his own department store. It seems that war and preoccupation with problems of defense discourage realism in style as well as the frank presentation of social problems (this undoubtedly explains the recent boom in sentimental romances and farce comedies). Two years ago *Primrose Path* and *Of Mice and Men* exposed proletarian life with the most radical realism, but there was no picture in the first six months' production of this year which can be compared for sincere realism to either of these films. The cruel truth of *Tobacco Road* was changed in John Ford's film version to ribald comedy.

But Mr. Ford, otherwise an almost unshakably realistic director, produced the film's most pitiless and yet most compassionate studies of proletarian types in such pictures as *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Long Voyage Home* (based on four of O'Neill's one-act plays) and his films of the Irish Revolution, *The Informer* and *The Plough and the Stars*. *The Grapes of Wrath* appeared just ten years after *The Cabin in the Cotton*, the earliest realistic film on farm life. Later on came *Golden Harvest*, of farmer against speculator, and *White Bondage*, dealing with share croppers. A new beginning in social discussion in picture form is represented by the documentary films,

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The Plow that Broke the Plains, *The River*, *The Power and the Land* and *People of the Cumberland*.

Stories about law cases and doctors sometimes serve as vehicles for comment on problems of contemporary society—in the one category the early *Arrowsmith*, *The Citadel*, *We Are Not Alone* and the documentary, *The Fight for Life;* in the other, such impressive films as *Winterset* (based on Maxwell Anderson's drama), *They Won't Forget*, a denunciation of sectional hatred, and Fritz Lang's *Fury*, a highly artistic and terrifying story of mob hysteria.

The historical, biographical and Western picture, as developed during recent years, has been significant for an increasingly vigorous expression of democratic ideas. For one thing great figures of history have been portrayed as human beings rather than as heroes (*Catherine the Great*, *Queen Christina*, *The Private Life of Henry VIII*). In 1936 William Dieterle launched a series of historical films that are a chapter by themselves in that they deal with the dramatic achievements of people whose lives *per se* were quite undramatic; the life stories of Louis Pasteur and Émile Zola, of Florence Nightingale and Juarez, of Dr. Ehrlich and journalist Reuter, stress the greatness of plain men battling for the progress of mankind. After 1939, when the European-Fascist threat came much closer to this country, the democratic emphasis of the biographical picture became an emphasis on Americanism. In *Young Abe Lincoln* and *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* the President in his hard work, in his joy and sorrow, is a true man of the people; it is difficult and incessant labor carried on for the good of all in the face of the heaviest handicaps, rather than any specifically heroic deed, which is interpreted as heroism. The same is true of pictures like *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell*, *Young Edison* and *Edison the Man*. The very expensive *Brigham Young—Frontiersman* says less about the faith, organization and customs of the Mormons than about the hardships of the trek to Utah and the obstacles encountered in cultivating the land; it utilizes an episode in American history to glorify the pioneer spirit.

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This conquest of the country as a democratic, national process, has become the leitmotiv of countless and in some respects excellently handled historical films. The Western and the adventure story have thereby truly undergone such a transmogrification that even the best directors of Hollywood compete in this pattern: John Ford's *Stagecoach* and *Drums Along the Mohawk*, King Vidor's *Northwest Passage*, Frank Lloyd's *The Howards of Virginia*, Fritz Lang's *Western Union*, William Wyler's *The Westerner*, Sam Wood's *Rangers of Fortune*, Michael Curtis' *Santa Fé Trail.*

The first World War, resurrected in the movies of all countries during the second half of the twenties, was portrayed with objective realism in such silent cinema masterpieces as America's *The Big Parade* and *What Price Glory. Journey's End* and *All Quiet on the Western Front* carried this tradition over into the sound picture, but with an increasingly insistent tendency towards pacifism (as in *Broken Lullaby*, *The Doomed Battalion*, *Farewell to Arms*).

Unfortunately war movies have been lifted by recent events from the retrospective to the level of timely pictures. The Chinese-Japanese war produced the documentary films, *The 400 Million* and *China Strikes Back*, and many melodramas, all of which took the part of China; the Spanish Civil War such documentary films as *The Spanish Earth* and *Heart of Spain*, in defense of Republicans, the feature picture *Blockade*—so strongly pro-Loyalist that some theaters would not show it—*Last Train from Madrid*, and the projected *For Whom the Bell Tolls*; the seizure of Czecho-Slovakia, the documentary film, *Crisis.*

The first American anti-fascist film, *Are We Civilized?* (1934) was an "impassioned demand for freedom of thought, speech and press and for international peace and understanding"; in 1936-37 *The Legion of Terror* and *Black Legion*, built on a framework of factual material, attacked secret political terror-organizations in this country; *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* (1939) was a striking revelation of the growth and detec-

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tion of Nazi propaganda in the United States; *Beast of Berlin* was a crude picture of Nazi Germany itself, far inferior artistically to the British-produced *Pastor Hall*, based on Ernst Toller's drama about Pastor Niemoeller.

But the uncertainty that had been increasing among film producers since Hitler's initial Blitzkrieg successes began seriously to affect production. Hollywood feared to be blacklisted by a possibly victorious, world-dominant fascism, and the majority of companies soon ceased making anti-fascist films. Only when the United States felt threatened and the country girded itself for an all-out-for-defense movement did Hollywood unite in a Motion Picture Committee Cooperating for National Defense, following an historic conversation between President Roosevelt and Walter Wanger, President of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The government itself now encourages and stimulates movie productions.

Francis S. Harmon, the Committee's coordinator, was able to tell the Daughters of the American Revolution at their 50th Continental Congress in Washington that "one sixth of all newsreel subjects have been related to national defense; each week the nation's theaters are exhibiting one of a series of 12 one-minute army recruiting trailers. . . ." He announced "historical reviews of the development of various arms of the service by producers of commercial entertainment films—and a series of 50 training films, which are being made in Hollywood under the auspices of the Research Council of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences with U. S. Army Signal Corps." Paramount's schedule of 10 pictures and Warner Brothers' of nine are the most ambitious of the programs planned by all eight of the major companies and the independents, in what *The Motion Picture Herald* calls the "all-out production schedule of pictures dealing with World War II, national defense preparations of the United States, sabotage and espionage —with 46 pictures and five serials being backgrounded on these subjects."

In 1938 *Men With Wings*, a survey of the development of

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aviation, "had its pacifist ending changed on the advice of the War Department so that American air preparedness was emphasized. . . ." Today, of course, no such advice would be necessary. The film industry cooperates willingly with various army and navy departments to produce such frank defense-propaganda pictures as *I Wanted Wings*, *Flight Command* and *Naval Academy*. Those redoubtable saviours of their country, Abbott and Costello and Bob Hope, introduced the blunt instrument of slapstick to democracy's arsenal in the amazingly successful box office hits *Buck Privates*, *In the Navy* and *Caught in the Draft*.

President Roosevelt addressed the film industry for the first time February 27, 1941, at the 13th annual award dinner of the Hollywood Academy, saying "We have seen the American motion picture reflect our civilization throughout the world—the aim, aspirations and ideals of a free people and of freedom. . . . Our government has invited you to do your share of the job of interpreting the people of the Western hemisphere to one another." A specialist was called to Hollywood to supervise pictures with Latin-American themes and the White House sent actors as good-will ambassadors to South America.

For months *The March of Time* dealt exclusively with defense and war: *Uncle Sam the Non-Belligerent*, *Americans All*, *Arms and the Man*, *The United States Navy*, *Canada at War* etc. Its only feature-length picture, *The Ramparts We Watch*, was however its least successful attempt. Other firms released shorts describing the most important events of American history and the tasks of national defense; the veteran Cecil B. de Mille, assisted by James A. Shotwell, the historian, culled from thousands of earlier pictures a sequence of 200 scenes for *Land of Liberty*, a dramatic cavalcade of American history; and *The World in Flames* was compiled from newsreel clips of world-wide events during the period from 1929 to 1940.

An interesting development among recent Hollywood films has been the remake of old pictures about World War I: *Dawn Patrol*, *Thunder Afloat*, *Four Sons* and *Waterloo Bridge*; and

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the creation of pictures about generally-known World War I subjects: *The Fighting 69th* and the excellent *Sergeant York.*

The artistic and moral effect of propaganda pictures is in direct proportion to the subtlety with which their main theme is handled. The early American defense films were far less impressive than the bulk of English pictures shown in this country (*London Can Take It, Blackout, Night Train, Convoy*), although Hollywood's standard was raised somewhat in such recent thrillers as *Man Hunt* and *Underground.* The adventures of foreign correspondents provided exciting if superficial themes for *Foreign Correspondent* and *Arise My Love.* But it was in *Mortal Storm, Escape* and *So Ends Our Night,* profoundly moving and yet objective, translating the terror of Nazi Germany in terms of an ominous stillness, that propaganda was least obtrusive and therefore most successful. The importance of Chaplin's comedy, *The Great Dictator,* a wise and witty piece of work despite its unevenness, rests upon the ingenious fabric of its detail in satirizing dictatorship.

The past has proved that the level of propaganda pictures is seldom high. However, these films, apparently inevitable in wartime, should not be allowed to discredit the high artistic level of the best American productions of pure story features and contemporary problem films. I am inclined to agree with Lewis Jacobs, whose *The Rise of the American Film* (1939) is by far the best critical history of the American motion picture, and to whom I owe much, when he says:

> The rising tide of "Americanism" with its accompanying endorsement of democracy, has brought new vitality to the screen and fresh respect to producers. It has led many to hope that Hollywood will participate actively in strengthening progressive forces and in retarding the ever-threatening forces of reaction.

The inexhaustible financial, technical and artistic resources of the motion picture industry have made and will make not only exciting entertainment or a powerful instrument for democracy; above all they have created and will continue to create, good art.

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In the Workshop

Radio and Its Progeny

LEWIS H. TITTERTON

AMERICAN radio broadcasting is not exactly at the crossroads. It has had troubles, to be sure, but it also has had rich moments of triumph. It has youth, as youth is reckoned in industry, and it is still growing both technically and artistically. But now Europe's war casts long shadows over its future.

The war, one of the great news events of history, would naturally affect radio long before it disturbed the normal day's work in other industries. Priorities, rationing raw materials and mobilizing production facilities for national defense, place an effective block in radio's path of expansion; and radio manufacturers are themselves deeply engaged in their part of the national defense production scheme. Consequently radio's road has become strewn with difficulties, particularly for its three infant services: television, the amazing art of transmitting moving images through the air; facsimile; and FM, or frequency modulation, broadcasting.

Two other developments may be traced directly to the war: the first is a spectacular growth in America's overseas broadcasting by powerful short-wave stations; the second is a striking change in radio's domestic program structure. The tumble of events in Europe and a succession of critical national issues at home have enormously whetted the public appetite for news. Radio has become an indispensable instrument for keeping abreast of events, not of the day or hour, but of the minute. Newspapers themselves also draw on news broadcasts by a score or more of national radio systems.

The direct result of all this has been a multiplication of news broadcasts. The *New York Times*, one of many newspapers which now regularly publish schedules of these, lists more than 90 such daily programs over seven of the city's many stations. NBC's latest schedule, before me as I write, contains about 30 daily news broadcasts and news commentaries for the New York listener. These are, in most instances, quick summaries of the day's news as gathered by American press associations and by the broadcasters' own professional listeners to the world's radio stations. One significant change, however, has been wrought: the major broadcasting organizations have found it necessary to establish staffs of correspondents to report exclusively for radio from foreign news capitals. NBC alone now has a score of representatives in Europe, Africa and Asia. Frequently their broadcasts are the only news dispatches to penetrate the void cre-

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ated by disrupted communications systems. The voices of Fred Bate and Edwin Murrow at London, Max Jordan at Berlin and Basle, Martin Agronsky at Ankara and dozens of others have made us all conscious of this new type of foreign correspondence. Comparatively recent examples of their achievements were reports on the signing of the Franco-German Armistice in the forest of Compiègne, the scuttling of the pocket battleship Graf Spee, and the terms of the Munich Agreement.

The turn in the world's affairs has also made the broadcasting hours a field day for the radio commentator. H. V. Kaltenborn, Lowell Thomas, Raymond Gram Swing, Elmer Davis—these are as well-known in the American home today as was Arthur Brisbane a decade and more ago.

Radio has furthermore become a prime instrument for the enunciation of national policy and decision. One recalls that Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain used radio to announce to the world that his country was at war with Nazi Germany. First news of Germany's declaration of war against Greece and Jugoslavia was heard in New York while it was still being announced to members of Berlin's foreign press corps by Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. Winston Churchill's periodic reports to the world by radio are front-page news stories. And, in our own country, Franklin D. Roosevelt has justly earned the title of The Radio President. The reason for each of these broadcasts by national leaders is plain to the sight of the understanding eye. Radio, as one German apologist put it more than five years ago, "has the advantage over all other means of forming public opinion, through its ability directly to impress the whole of the people." European nations other than Germany have made radio "the all-embracing instrument" for sounding no other than official policy. In the United States, however, the air still healthily resounds with the clash of sharp opinions.

In other types of broadcast programs—music, drama, special events—the basic pattern still seems quite stable. Considerable improvement is to be noted among radio's dramatic presentations. Some gains, too, have been made in strictly educational series, for which the chief difficulty remains the problem of gearing nation-wide broadcasts to four time zones and at least 48 different school systems.

Special events—the launching of a new ship, a radio tour of the city's food market and so on—have been somewhat reduced in number in the last few months. Those remaining in the day's schedule have taken on a definite flavor of national defense and war. Gone are the extravagant "Singing Mouse" and "Talking Parrot" contests of several years ago. Today their time goes to a nation-wide radio tour of army training posts, the commissioning of a new battleship, or a broadcast on the delivery of a new anti-aircraft gun. The trend will probably be even more pronounced, in a greater number of broadcasts, in the immediate future.

Here, in brief summary, are the significant changes in radio's program structure. Its over-all appearance is still much the same. The big expensive variety show, the daytime dramatic serial, the symphony concert, the drama, the opera broadcast, the sports report and the commentary—these still dominate. But war and deep concern for national security have greatly altered a very considerable fraction of

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the day's programs, and, more noteworthy, public interest in this fraction is rapidly increasing.

After two public hearings at Washington, months of deliberation by an industry committee and a lull in activity extending over about one year, the thick television muddle has finally cleared. The Federal Communications Commission granted its first license for commercial operation of a television station to the National Broadcasting Company, effective July 1, 1941. Station WNBT went on the air that day, surprisingly enough, with several commercial accounts. Other broadcasters are hurriedly readying their television plants, as this is written, for full commercial operation in coming weeks.

It is yet too early to say whether television is off to a fast start. The chances are all against it. Severe restrictions, notably of aluminum deliveries, will most certainly permit manufacture of only a limited number of receivers for public sale. Some prospective television broadcasters also find difficulty in obtaining equipment for completing their studio and transmitter plants in the face of priorities for defense production. But all are making valiant efforts to get on the air with images for the public to see. At the moment receiver manufacturers are busy adjusting sets already sold to new technical standards approved by the F.C.C. By the time this reaches print the job should be finished and the project of converting the available stock of receivers to the new specifications well under way.

American television has had a curious history. Two years ago it seemed laden with promise for rapid expansion over the nation—rapid, that is, for an industry of major size. The RCA-NBC organization, operating under technical standards drawn up by the Radio Manufacturers Associations and submitted to the F.C.C. for its approval, started a limited television service in New York City. The time was coincident with the opening of the New York World's Fair of 1939. All went reasonably well until the RCA, encouraged by the promise of limited commercialization decided to embark on a campaign to popularize television. The advertised campaign, offering receivers at reduced prices, promptly drew governmental disapproval. The promised limited commercialization was suspended and a subsequent hearing failed to settle the vexatious questions of technical standards for television.

A new committee of the industry met many times in 1940 to tussle with the problem and submitted its report to the F.C.C. early this year. A second hearing at Washington brought out traces of lingering disagreement. The government body, however, issued an approval of specific engineering standards and the industry immediately set about incorporating them into their television operations.

Radio has developed a truly amazing set of instruments for television. Receivers already sold give excellent images in sizes up to about 8 inches by 11. Experimental receivers, designed for home use by the RCA organization, use a lens system and a rear projection screen to yield images 18 inches high by 24 inches wide. For theater use the RCA group has developed a projection receiver casting images 15 feet high by 20 feet wide on a motion picture screen. This is somewhat larger than the image shown in the av-

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erage American motion picture theater. All of these receivers, I must point out, operate without benefit of a single moving mechanical part aside from manual tuning controls.

Lately demonstrations of television in color, first undertaken in 1928, have been renewed. Both camera and receiver, in this type of color television, embody mechanically whirled color discs. Color television without use of a disc has been shown privately in the laboratory, but its designers, again the RCA, have confessed their inability so far to squeeze its transmissions into the 6,000-kilocycle channel allotted to each television station.

One final problem remains to be mentioned in the television scheme: the choice of means to connect stations in different cities so that first a regional, then a national, network may eventuate. The coaxial cable, an expensive line conductor, appeared to be the only answer a few years ago. Recently, however, the RCA has successfully demonstrated a line of automatic radio relays that seem to offer at least as good a solution.

Meanwhile experimental television broadcasting is already credited with a notable series of achievements. New York viewers of National Broadcasting Company television programs have seen the President, a complete national political convention, Broadway plays and openings, major league baseball, collegiate football, Fifth Avenue's famous Easter Parade and recruits in training at Camp Upton. Television has caught the action and spirit of the circus at Madison Square Garden and the thrill of a major boxing bout.

At the moment television broadcasting is again swinging upward. NBC offers the several thousand receiver owners in and about New York City a minimum service of 15 hours a week. The Columbia Broadcasting System supplies a like number of hours over its station, still operating on an experimental license. The men of television are definitely out to rekindle the enthusiasm that accompanied television's launching two years ago. Successful exploitation of the medium demands the eventual investment of millions of dollars by the radio industry, in addition to the estimated $15,000,000 to $20,000,000 already marked up as development cost.

If one can judge by the spirit of those directly concerned with its development, television broadcasting faces an immediate period of intense activity coupled with a more conservative expansion in the number of home viewers. This latter is attributed to the difficulty of supplying receivers, of which it is estimated there are 4,500 already in New York homes and an additional 600 in public places. Today's audience for an average performance is computed at something more than 45,000 persons. The addition of perhaps another 4,000 receivers in the New York area before the year ends is foreseen.

Advertisers, in general, are intensely interested in the new sight-sound medium. They and their advertising agencies have not forgotten the lesson of sound broadcasting, which caught many unprepared for the effective use of radio. NBC alone has currently four contracts for extended series. Several other contracts await only the offer of suitable program material.

Before many months are out eight television stations, scattered over the United States, should be in regular operation. Included are one in Schenectady,

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three in New York City, one in Los Angeles, two in Washington and at least one in Chicago. NBC's plans foresee the building of the first television network, initiated in New York City and including Philadelphia and Washington.

The case of FM, or frequency modulation, broadcasting differs in several respects from that of television. FM offers no distinctly new service to the radio audience; it does offer greater fidelity. More important it opens the door to nearly static-free radio. That, men of the industry feel, should make FM welcome to the big city listener whose radio hours are bedeviled now and then by vacuum cleaners and electric razors in neighboring apartments, automobile ignition systems, elevator contactors and all manner of noisome man-made interference. FM resists these in large measure and in addition virtually ignores natural static.

The scientific explanation of this gratifying characteristic is twofold. FM, first of all, operates in the ultra-short-wave region of the radio spectrum—on waves, that is, between ten meters and one meter in length. These are singularly free of natural static. Even amplitude modulation stations using these waves can be heard with far greater clarity than AM stations in the standard broadcast band; terrific thunderstorms give rise only to a faint occasional click in reception. Secondly, FM's resistance to "noise" which does not equal one half the program volume is about 20 times that of AM. Once noises rise beyond one half the program level, however, FM is decidedly inferior to AM. FM's limits of service are thus narrower than amplitude modulation's, but within those limits it yields superior reception. Its geographical range, too, is more constricted. Use of the ultra short wave rules out the probability of distant reception, but results in less interference between stations on the same wave length.

It becomes clear that FM is a desirable addition to broadcasting services. The Federal Communications Commission has expressed for it what might almost be called enthusiasm, and doubtless may be counted on to give all encouragement to its development. The F.C.C. has already issued permits for the construction of more than thirty FM stations, some few of which have already begun service; others are certain to follow.

Here enters the devil of economics. In order to listen to FM broadcasts the listener must have the comparatively expensive FM receiver. Where the AM table model receiver may be bought for $10 or even less, the FM table set costs about $60. So the radio industry doesn't expect a boom in what is still a very limited quality service commanding a premium price. The industry does, however, anticipate a gradual increase in the number of receivers sold and in the number of stations offering FM service.

Radio facsimile is the third of the industry's amazing progeny. It resembles television in that it utilizes the "electric eye" at the transmitter. At the receiver, however, a special recorder preserves on paper what the transmitter has flung into the air. Facsimile's province, therefore, is the still picture, print, writing, symbols and so on, of which, as its name would indicate, it provides records identical in all essential respects to the original piece

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placed in the scanner at the transmitter—provided the original has been prepared with careful attention to type style and size, to contrast in illustrations. Facsimile's importance to broadcasting lies in the fact that it may be operated on the longer waves of the standard broadcast band, on the ultra-short-wave channel, or in conjunction with the FM sound station. It may also be multiplexed, which is a short way of saying that facsimile may be transmitted simultaneously, and in the same channel, with a sound or television program.

Some experimental broadcasting of facsimile has been carried on in the United States. Stations in New York, Buffalo, St. Louis and a small group in California, I believe, broadcast the service for a time during those hours when regular sound programs were not on the air. All, according to my recollection, have now ceased.

One's first impression, on watching print issue from the facsimile recorder, is that here stands the basic instrument for the creation of tomorrow's radio newspaper. That may be true, but at present it is hard to see how the radio newspaper can hope to compete with the excellent and inexpensive printed article. Facsimile will more probably be used to place material supplementary to the sound or television program in the hands of the radio audience—such material as recipes mentioned on a domestic science program or notes for the symphony concert. News bulletins might be "cut in" in much the same manner that regularly scheduled radio programs are now interrupted for the reading of a particularly important news item. The broadcaster hopes that it will be possible to sell advertising space.

Facsimile suggests all these uses; but here again economics affects the problem. At a low estimate the facsimile recorder—which may be used with an ordinary radio set, a television receiver or an FM receiver—would cost from $75 to $100. Considering that the average radio receiver bought today is much less expensive than the minimum facsimile recorder, it is highly improbable that today's listener would buy such a machine to attach to his radio. The difference for each dollar invested between the service he now receives from a sound receiver, and the service he would receive from a facsimile recorder, would be too great to warrant the purchase of such a machine. The more thoughtful of the industry's men, however, do see a way to establish facsimile: a radio set containing both television and FM receivers may in the comparatively near future sell for about $300; to add a facsimile recorder would not greatly increase its price. The services to the owner of the three units of this set would then be approximately in proportion to their relative costs.

Radio's men do not take a gloomy view of the prospects for their three new services. They do not turn from hard, cold fact. They realize only too well that had television's beginning been officially blessed in 1939, two receivers might have been sold more easily than one is sold in 1941; and 1939 was itself ten years removed from America's last boom year. Nor does it appear now that world conditions will soon improve to allow a more normal industrial life. But television and FM have been carried to a remarkable degree of perfection. Certain organizations have established themselves as leaders in one or the other field; to stop here might

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easily mean surrender of pre-eminence, would jeopardize millions of dollars invested as development costs. Besides, as one of the radio's leaders of experiment put it: we have no assurance that days of quiet prosperity will follow close upon these of international turmoil. So radio will carry on into the future, not with senseless optimism, but with a quiet determination to finish the job it has begun.

If war has clouded the immediate future of television, FM and facsimile, it has created a boom in another branch of radio: international short-wave broadcasting has taken on all the appearance of a defense industry—which, in effect, it is.

A little more than ten years ago William Bolitho was able to note that "the army of small talents and great tacts, who rush joyfully on any possibility of the one new career we have invented, National Propaganda, have for some reason missed the radio." But they did not miss it for long. Domestic radio was the first to be subverted to propaganda use. Short wave followed a few years later. Britain's empire service, the first highly organized short-wave system, was directed toward maintaining ties between distant colonies and the mother country. With heavy government subsidies, the German system built powerful stations at Zeesen to spray propaganda by radio beams directed all over the world. Italy, too, followed suit and, to a lesser degree, France. Russia made itself heard over international boundaries. Now there is hardly a major power left which does not nightly speak in strange tongues to strangers over the seas.

American overseas broadcasters—in nearly every case those who also serve the domestic listener—began to establish short-wave contact with Latin America in 1937, following recommendations by Pan American Union meetings at Montevideo and Buenos Aires. Their programs, almost purely cultural in nature, were given in Spanish and Portuguese and were designed to interest listeners of neighboring countries in the New World.

No sharp development has since taken place in that fundamental policy. Gradually, however, totalitarian governments in Europe placed unmistakable emphasis on political and economic appeals in their programs for Latin America. That signaled the beginning of a struggle for the attention of Central and South American radio listeners. Our government was gravely concerned. The power of American short-wave stations was immediately boosted, the staffs of foreign language broadcasters enlarged. The F.C.C., partially to offset the advantages of heavy subsidies for foreign overseas systems, granted permission to American broadcasters for the sale of time to advertisers.

Broadcast service for the listener overseas differs materially from that for the domestic audience. Many of the programs popular here would seem failures to the Argentine or Brazilian who happened to tune in. News is the main item on our short-wave schedule, and our short-wave stations have a decided advantage. American press associations' accounts of the day's news events are more unbiased than any other in the world. Our government's statements on foreign policy are invariably broadcast, usually both in English and in complete translations. Our industries, popular arts and sports of the United States are interpreted in separate series.

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NBC's International Division broadcasts for six hours daily in Spanish and for two in Portuguese to New World audiences. In early afternoon it directs German, French and Italian hours over a European beam. Still other hours in English are heard in both Europe and Latin America. It appears highly probable that more foreign language hours will soon be added to the daily schedule.

In order to maintain the schedule of sixteen hours a day the International Division employs a staff of more than 40 foreign-language and program experts. Most are American citizens by birth, but reared in, say, Puerto Rico, Argentina or Mexico. Others have become citizens by naturalization. All are thoroughly familiar with the language, customs and tastes of the listeners they address every day. The commercial staff at Radio City is still small, but it has already provided sponsors for International Division broadcasts of Metropolitan Opera, Madison Square Garden boxing bouts, news programs, a variety program and other regular features.

Most overseas stations use 50,000-watt transmitters, as powerful as the largest domestic stations. NBC has two stations at Bound Brook, New Jersey, broadcasting successively over many directional beam antenna arrays. These, usually vast metallic spider webs spread over a considerable area, focus most of the broadcast energy in a single desired direction. Their construction multiplies the effectiveness of the transmitter at least 20 times. A 50,000-watt station, as far as the listener in Lima or Rio de Janeiro is concerned, becomes one of at least 1,000,000 watts whenever its beam is turned toward his receiving antenna.

With similar equipment every American short-wave broadcaster is making strenuous efforts to gain and hold supremacy in the New World for the United States. Letters from foreign listeners—NBC received 80,000 of them in 1940—indicate that our voices are both heard and appreciated. The unbiased nature of news programs from the United States has had special appeal to listeners in foreign lands.

Two new developments have recently appeared in short-wave broadcasting: rebroadcast of short-wave programs from the United States by a series of local stations from Havana to Buenos Aires is being attempted; and the appointment of a Coordinator of International Broadcasting by the six largest of our short-wave organizations has recently been announced.

Both the National Broadcasting Company and the Columbia Broadcasting System have exerted themselves to establish permanent working agreements with Latin American broadcasters. Some NBC International Division programs are even now being regularly rebroadcast by local stations in South America. The object, of course, is to reach the listener who has no short-wave receiver. Broadcasters here make special efforts to have local stations south of our borders carry such programs as the inaugural of President Roosevelt, the addresses of the Secretary of State and other government spokesmen. Here the relations with the Latin American station owner become all-important. These do not spring into being; strokes of a pen on a contract do not create them. Good will grows month by month with fair dealing among nations and men in an atmosphere free of distrust.

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The newly-named coordinator is to work on the problem of making more efficient use of the whole of the country's facilities for short-wave broadcasting. Collectively these are as good as, perhaps even superior to, the overseas broadcasting system of any other country. All of the nine stations involved now broadcast, or shortly will do so, at 50,000 watts. They might conceivably become a powerful coordinated network with each station beaming programs to those parts of the world where its transmissions were most effective. Thus while one station carried a program in Spanish for South American countries, another might swing its beam a few degrees to the east to carry the same program in Portuguese for Brazilian listeners. Simultaneously French, German, Italian and English versions might be launched on the air toward European audiences.

Something like this arrangement proved to be highly successful last January when the NBC International Division supplied several foreign-language descriptions of the President's inaugural from the Capitol steps to a small group of short-wave stations. The linking of short-wave units to cooperate in sending America's message to the world would put at our country's disposal a weapon potent for combating foreign propaganda.

Here, in brief, has been presented a hurried review of America's chief radio problems. It is far from complete. Doubtless by the time it reaches print new developments in the war in Europe and our national defense program will have created fresh problems and added responsibilities for American radio broadcasting, and the pattern will again have changed.

The ANTIOCH REVIEW presents in its Fall Number:

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Discussion

THE WEST'S DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION

To the Editor:

It may seem captious to point out a slight oversight in Mr. I. L. Kandel's excellent article, "The Fantasia of Current Education" (Summer 1941) —and all the more so because I agree with nearly everything Mr. Kandel said.

Anyone, however, who has lived some years in China or Japan must marvel at the still deep-seated assumption of Western writers that the only human experience—in the field of education or otherwise—worth citing is that of our own European tradition. On p. 288 Mr. Kandel refers to Comenius (1592-1670) as one "whose reputation rests on the production of the first illustrated school text." If he had added "in the West" the statement would be true, but it is not true in the generalized form in which it is put.

The Chinese had excellent pictorial textbooks for children before the time of Comenius. In the *Annual Report of the Librarian of Congress* for 1939 (p. 253-257) there is a description of *An Illustrated Reader for Elementary Instruction* (*Yang-mêng t'u-shuo*) compiled by a scholar named T'u Shih-hsiang who obtained his doctorate in 1580. This *Reader* narrates—in an easy colloquial style—one hundred episodes from Chinese history, each episode accompanied by a well-executed full-page woodcut depicting the incident in question. There were doubtless many other illustrated school texts in China before this.

I bring this matter to notice only because it represents a kind of oversight in which even our best writers indulge. The world, however, is shrinking rapidly, and a wider perspective will soon be obligatory—if we wish to say things that are more than half true.

The habit of assuming—unconsciously, of course—that what we got from Greece and Rome and Palestine is all that really matters, is beginning to have serious implications for the future. The educated people of India, China and Japan used to think of their own cultures in that way, but for a century or more the grim pressure of events has made them aware of other traditions which they must reckon with in order to live reasonably well-adjusted lives in the modern world. Students in those countries—from the grammar schools upward—are spending almost as much time learning English as they devote to their own literatures. One can say, therefore, that they are in possession of keys for unlocking two cultures—their own and ours—whereas we seem to be quite satisfied to be unlocking only our own. The educated people of Asia—the writing men certainly—know much more about us than persons of similar attainments in this country know about them. Here is a disparity which can only be corrected by a more enlightened attention in our universities to the languages of those countries and to the comparative study of their literature, history, philosophy and art. Knowledge moves forward by comparison of things that are different—it cannot get very far if the things compared are, after all, much the same. The disassociative jolt which comes by making new comparisons may cause us to revise some deep-rooted misconceptions, but if the Asiatics could take it I see no reason why we cannot too. We may find to our surprise, as they did, that it is one way to appreciate and understand the things in our culture which matter most.

In *The Nation* for February 10, 1940, Mr. Archibald MacLeish—though writing particularly of our South American relationships—made some remarks which are equally applicable to Eastern Asia. He wrote: "If the cultural relations of peoples were what our uncles and grandfathers thought of them—diversions, decorations, and irrelevancies—failure . . . would be mildly shameful and no more. But in a divided world in which the real issue of division is the cultural issue, cultural relations are not irrelevancies. They are everything. And in such a world a cultural defeat is a defeat on the one front on which defeat cannot be accepted."

A. W. HUMMEL, *Chief, Division of Orientalia*
The Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

OPERA IN PITTSBURGH

To the Editor:

It was with great interest that I read in the Summer issue Robert Lawrence's article on "Opera in the United States: A Problem and a Challenge." The author is indeed right in his premise that

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there is and must be a future for opera in this country, but I think he does not realize that there are many who have realized the lack of opportunity for our musicians, and have, in perhaps a slow and feeble way, yet with determination, been doing something about it.

The Pittsburgh Opera Society, a non-profit corporation with the distinct purpose of providing here in our community an opportunity for all interested persons to learn and perform opera in English, was founded in 1939 and since the first production of *The Tales of Hoffman* in the spring of 1940 has to its credit performances of Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*. Under the leadership of one of the greatest conductors in the country, Dr. Vladimir Bakaleinikoff, the members of the Society, the orchestra, ballet and stage directors work in a cooperative way to give the best in educational training on all phases of work connected with opera. In production are Mozart's *The Magic Flute* and Bizet's *Carmen*, both of which will be given in one week early next March as an Opera Festival. Costumes are made by the members in charge of that branch, and designs and sets are executed by persons deeply interested in seeing the arts preserved in our land, and whose professional experience makes the work a delight.

Our struggle has been, and still is, to educate the public to the fact that something fine can be accomplished by those who are learning, who perhaps have not yet arrived at the so-called "Metropolitan" status, but who are pliable, fresh, and full of the enthusiasm for doing a thing for the joy of accomplishment—for seeing American music growing and taking its rightful place in the life of tomorrow.

We would welcome a national opera movement as a man marooned on an island welcomes a sail, and I just wish to state for the Pittsburgh Opera Society that there are people working along the lines outlined in Mr. Lawrence's article—and seriously building opera in America. We must have translators who know music, to make the English in the score sensible as well as musically fit to be sung, and we must have the backing of our music-lovers to enable us to give the productions with enough box-office success to pay for them, simple and unpretentious as they are.

CAROLYN HUNT MAHAFFEY,
Secretary of the Board,
Pittsburgh Opera Society, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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About Our Authors

Double quotation marks usually indicate passages taken directly from autobiographical letters requested from the authors themselves.

RICHARD M. DORSON was graduated from Harvard in 1937 and reports that "after a year's indecision I confounded my professors by returning to pursue graduate work in the new field, history of American civilization." Since that time he has edited a collection of tall tales, *Davy Crockett: American Comic Legend* (1939), written articles and, "in place of more orthodox graduate student side-jobs," coaches the freshmen tennis and squash teams—the result, he admits, of his undergraduate energy having been "largely devoted to two sports. By my final year I had worked up to the number one slot in tennis and squash racquets, and that year won the national inter-collegiate title in squash, attained an eastern ranking in tennis." He "followed the trail of Paul Bunyan interest in a junket around the country two summers ago" and says he will "be very grateful to readers who point out to me heroes I have missed."

As chief counsel for the principal American claimants in both the Black Tom and the Kingsland suits against the German government after the First World War, AMOS J. PEASLEE would know whereof he speaks when he says that "those sabotage claims and the 'Rate of Exchange Cases,' for which I was also chief counsel before the International Commission, were probably the two most important groups of cases in the field of international law litigated in the present generation. The final decision in the sabotage claims was the first instance of a decision by an international tribunal holding that a major world power had committed sabotage on the territory of a neutral government and also had presented a fraudulent defense before an international tribunal." While attached to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace Mr. Peaslee proposed several amendments to the Covenant of the League of Nations. Now he finds time between cases for "a little amateur architecture, plenty of tennis, riding and sailing" at his Clarksboro, N. J. ancestral home.

GILBERT HIGHET's special interest—and this will be no news to his readers—is satire. "I am finishing two books in that field—a life of Juvenal, with a critical analysis of his work, and a collection of 'Studies in Satire,' ranging from Horace to Browning." Born in Scotland, he went to Balliol College, Oxford, from the University of Glasgow, was appointed a Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, and left there in 1937 to serve for a year as Visiting Associate at Columbia University, where he was appointed professor of Greek and Latin in 1938. At Oxford he "wrote a good deal of poetry, including two verse-dramas produced by John Masefield at his private theater," was one of the founders of the Oxford University Experimental Theatre Club and editor of *The New Oxford Outlook*. Noncommittal about the biographical elements in *Above Suspicion* by Helen MacInness, who is Mrs. Gilbert Highet, he admits wistfully, "Only I wish I had helped to kill von Aschenhausen."

JOHN DEQUEDVILLE BRIGGS, headmaster of St. Paul Academy for the past 27 years and president of the Headmasters' Association in 1941, writes cautiously that "my friend Perry Smith, of the North Shore Country Day School, says I have a progressive school and won't admit it. His neighbor, Herbert Smith, of the Francis Parker School, says I have a conservative school and a progressive home." And then he apparently proves at least part of Mr. Smith's contention by adding "The top floor of my house is a woodworking shop, . . . the basement is devoted to photography, . . . the living room houses two pianos and a large music library. One younger child plays the cello, another the violin. My own musical activity now consists mainly of making Leica photographs of orchestral scores to be projected on a screen for study in conjunction with records, by a sizeable group of interested boys." And he is a "fairly good fisherman, an intermittent stamp-collector, and a bit of an amateur botanist."

Following service as a staff member of the German Peace Delegation to the Versailles Conference, HANS SIMONS rose rapidly to prominence in Germany during the post-War decade. He acted as adviser in the Reich Home Office and the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, and became Director of the Institute of Political Science in Berlin. In 1929 he was elected District Governor of Pomerania and in 1930 of Lower Silesia, finding time to do much writing and lecturing in addition to his official duties. Dismissed from public office and forced into exile with the rise of the Nazi Party, Dr. Simons came to the United States. He has lectured widely here and was recently named dean of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research,

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where he has been serving for some time as professor of political science.

DANIEL GREGORY MASON, composer, author of *Music in My Time* (1938) and other books, professor of music at Columbia University, and THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR's Special Editorial Adviser in the field of music, says the quality he likes most in people is "a fresh unfrightened wish to find out things for themselves, not to surrender to mob superstitions, opinions and fashions. I like to see them exercise their own faculties, however humble, fearlessly, accepting whatever unconventional conclusions they are thus spontaneously led to. It is because dictators and prima donna conductors discourage this fresh self-reliant curiosity that they seem to me such a menace to all our best values. In my teaching I have found many students able and willing to judge for themselves, unless or until they are over-awed by majority fallacies."

JEAN CHARLOT, who will be affectionately recalled by our readers for his "Painter's Insight, Public Sight" (Spring 1937), "Surrealism—Or the Reason for Unreason" (Spring 1938), "Cubism: Requiescat in Pace" (Winter 1938-39), "But Is It Art?" (Summer 1939), and "The Painter Sees the World" (Winter 1940-41) is artist in residence at the University of Georgia this year. Those who have followed his work as well as his avocation of writing will not be more surprised to hear that he will paint murals for the University than they will be to read what he has to say of the technique of mural-painting in the pages of this issue. His murals done for the Mexican government may now be seen in the Ministry of Public Education and the Escuela Preparatoria, Mexico City; others are at the University of Iowa. During the past season he was instructor in fresco at the Art Student League of New York.

JOHN LIVINGSTON LOWES, emeritus professor of English literature at Harvard, was for many years a friend and colleague of George Lyman Kittredge. Together they served as editor of synonyms for the *New International Dictionary*, and Mr. Lowes's own writing—including such books as *The Art of Geoffrey Chaucer*—and his editing of *Hamlet* and *All's Well That Ends Well*—indicate how closely his activities have paralleled those of his confrere.

"The working out of a comprehensive naturalistic philosophy that would derive from a first-hand examination of current materials in science, art and politics" is a project that MILTON K. MUNITZ believes offers "a rich and attractive program for worthwhile philosophic analysis at the present time. And to anyone sharing in however small a way in such a project, the writings of Santayana (especially in *The Life of Reason*), Dewey and Whitehead are of the highest importance. In the case of Santayana I have attempted to convey what seems to me the significance of his thought for this undertaking in a book on *The Moral Philosophy of Santayana*." That book was published in 1939 by the Press of Columbia University, where Mr. Munitz took his M.A. and Ph.D. He is an instructor of philosophy at the City College of New York.

An "old war horse" in the world of the movies is KURT PINTHUS' own phrase for himself—and with reason. In April 1913 he wrote the first serious film criticism ever published in Europe, a review of *Quo Vadis* which aroused a public debate. In the same year he published *Das Kinobuch*, containing his own views on the new art form and the first 15 original scenarios written by outstanding young dramatists and writers, at his suggestion, directly for the screen. He was thereafter the leading film critic of Germany. Previously he had been literary adviser to two German publishing houses and dramatic adviser to Max Reinhardt's Theaters. In 1925 he introduced literary discussions on the German radio. Since his arrival in this country he has lectured on literature, the theater and the movies at the New School for Social Research and is now, as a member of the Institute of Social Research, preparing a book about those arts as they existed in Central Europe between 1908 and 1933. He has found time here to renew friendships begun in Europe with Lubitsch, Dieterle, Lang, Veidt and others.

LEWIS H. TITTERTON, THE SCHOLAR's Special Editorial Adviser in the field of radio, joined the National Broadcasting Company as manager of the literary rights division in 1932, and simultaneously became a member of NBC's program planning board. Since 1936 he has been manager of the combined literary rights and continuity divisions of NBC under the title of manager, script division. Author in the past of several hundred critical pieces for *The New York Times*, he has devoted his spare time more recently to the reading of quantities of radio scripts. Weekends find him at his farm in Putnam County, N. Y., with, we suspect, a dozen scripts for company.

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